

\$4.50/CANADA \$5.50

COLUMBIA

JOURNALISM

REVIEW

SURPRISE!

PAY FOR JOURNALISTS IS GOING UP

**BUT
WHO'S
LEFT OUT
...AND
WHY ARE
WE STILL
PLAYING
CATCH-UP
?**

```

#BXBFBB ***** 5-DIGIT 48103
#48103MCR300SR001#
BG 00194 BN 00001
48103MCR300SR00A JRCL 241
XEROX U MICROFILMS
SERIALS
300 N ZEEB RD
ANN ARBOR MI 48103-1553

```

0 73361 64784 9

Also: BURNOUT IN THE NEWSROOM

IF YOU WANT TO SEE SOMETHING
done, just tell some human beings
it can't be done. Make it known that
it's impossible to fly to the moon,
or run a hundred metres in nine-
point-nine seconds, or solve Fermat's
Last Theorem. Remind the world that
no one has ever hit sixty-two home
runs in a season. Stuffed eighteen
people into a Volkswagen Bug. Set
half the world free. Or cloned a sheep.
Dangle the undoable in front of
the world. Then, consider it done.

HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT



40th annual John Swett Awards for Media Excellence

The California Teachers Association is proud to honor the winners of the 1998 John Swett Awards for Media Excellence. These awards recognize individual journalists, publications and stations for their dedication to excellence in covering education.

- ♦ **Mary Ballesteros-Coronel**, *La Opinion*, for Continuous Coverage
- ♦ **Julian Guthrie**, *The San Francisco Examiner*, for Series on a Single Subject/Theme
- ♦ **The Los Angeles Times**, for Single Subject/Theme, "Public Education: California's Perilous Slide"
- ♦ **Jondi Gumz**, *The Santa Cruz Sentinel*, for Continuous Coverage
- ♦ **Camilla Cohee**, *The Santa Barbara News-Press*, for Series on a Single Subject/Theme
- ♦ **Holly K. Hacker and Jean Cowden Moore**, *The Ventura County Star*, for Series on a Single Subject/Theme
- ♦ **The Santa Maria Times**, for Series on a Single Subject/Theme, "In Plain English"
- ♦ **Laura Howell**, *The Fontana Herald News*, for Continuous Coverage
- ♦ **The Fontana Herald News**, for Continuous Coverage
- ♦ **KGTV Channel 10, San Diego**, for Newscast Series, "Crossroads in the Classroom"
- ♦ **KCET-TV, Los Angeles**, for News Magazine Continuous Coverage
- ♦ **Cox Channel 4, San Diego**, News Magazine Series, "San Diego Insider"
- ♦ **Kathy Baron, KQED-FM, San Francisco**, for Continuous Coverage, "The California Report"
- ♦ **KPBS FM 89.5, San Diego**, News Magazine, "Making the Grade"

Congratulations to the Winners

Lois Tinson, President * Wayne Johnson, Vice President * Barbara E. Kerr, Secretary-Treasurer*
Carolyn Doggett, Executive Director * Bob Cherry, Associate Executive Director*
Tommye Hutto, Manager, Communications * Mike Myslinski, Media Consultant*
California Teachers Association/National Education Association



contents

JULY/AUGUST 1999

COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW

UPFRONT

MAGAZINES

A Neoliberal Tune-up at
The Washington Monthly
by Andrew Hearst



Nicholas Lemann,
page 10

ONLINE JOURNALISM

New Media, Old Values at the
Online News Association
by Nicholas Stein

OWNERSHIP

The New Harmonics in Hartford
by Carly Berwick

NEWSPAPERS

Small Papers, Big Chain
by Aaron Moore

FIRST AMENDMENT

Free Speech: Look
Who's Flunking
by Liza Featherstone

LANGUAGE CORNER

"Whose" You Can Use
by Evan Jenkins

NEW MEDIA

Medical News Goes Digital
by Janice Hopkins Tanne

DEPARTMENTS

INDEX

People and organizations
mentioned in this issue

LETTERS

IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

From Marconi to Murrow to —
Drudge?
by Lawrence K. Grossman

DARTS & LAURELS

ESSAY

The Virtual Reporter
by Mike Hoyt

THE LOWER CASE

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

4

6

17

21

62

65



Sally Squires, page 16



Bernstein (left), and Woodward, page 48



CORBIS/BETTMANN-UP



Features

COVER STORY

Pay for Journalists Is Going Up

24

Can it really be true — more money and more jobs in a profession where wages traditionally have been nothing to write home about? Surprisingly, over the past few years, the increase in journalists' earnings has outstripped those in most other occupations. Nonetheless, many newspeople are still playing catch-up.

by Anne Colamosca

WORKPLACE

Burnout!

30

Journalism can be an awesomely demanding vocation — mentally and physically — because of deadline pressures, long hours, and competition. That adds up to more anxiety, worry, and stress than some people in the profession can handle. What really happens when the job becomes too much? And what can be done to help the afflicted?

by Joanmarie Kalter

NEW MEDIA

What I Saw in the Digital Sea

34

A twentysomething journalist who swam for two years in the turbulent waters of online journalism lives to tell the tale: how the way news is collected, processed, and reported online is evolving and why he's worried about it.

by Frank Houston

The Water's Fine

37

Another journalist journeys from the Web to print — and back again.

by Jonathan Dube

COVER PHOTO: THE STOCK MARKET/REIN LOWERY

"TO ASSESS THE PERFORMANCE OF JOURNALISM . . . TO HELP STIMULATE CONTINUING IMPROVEMENT IN THE PROFESSION, AND TO SPEAK OUT FOR WHAT IS RIGHT, FAIR, AND DECENT"

From the founding editorial, 1961



Purnell Murdock (left), Wei Jingsheng, page 45



President Clinton and Helen Thomas (top), page 51
Richard Holbrooke, page 45

San Jose Mercury News race task force, page 38



CJR WORLD

Canada 52

Toronto's Bloody Newspaper Wars
by Don Townson

Magazine Cease-fire 53
by Nicholas Stein

BOOKS 55



Moses and Walter Annenberg, page 55

Legacy: A Biography of Moses and Walter Annenberg
by Christopher Ogden
Reviewed by Piers Brendon

Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War, and Death
by Susan Moeller
Reviewed by Tom Goldstein

EXCERPTS

Not by Politics Alone: The Enduring Influence of the Christian Right
by Sara Diamond 60

The Plot to Get Bill Gates
by Gary Rivlin

Secrecy: The American Experience
by Daniel Patrick Moynihan

Truth to Tell: Tell It Early, Tell It All, Tell It Yourself
by Lanny J. Davis



Senator Moynihan, page 60



Bill Gates, page 60

REPORTING

Rethinking the Race Beat

38

News organizations are striving for better coverage of issues that confront ethnic minorities. Do journalists need to be specialists to get that story right, or can editors just hand the task over to general assignment reporters?

by Barry Yeoman

CJR POLL

Handling Corrections

42

For 300 years, U.S. journalists have been wrestling with how to deal with blunders, bloopers, mistakes, and miscues that creep into their reports. In the latest CJR/Public Agenda poll, 125 senior newspeople arrive at some troubling conclusions.

by Neil Hickey

POLICY

A Babel of Broadcasts

44

America's taxpayer-funded global radio and TV services — Voice of America, Radio Free Asia, and many others — are pumping out propaganda to the world around the clock. But the duplication of language programs is wasting millions of dollars, and nobody knows who's listening.

by Mark Hopkins

SPECIAL REPORT

A Raucous Century of Covering Politics 48

From Mencken to McGrory, the 1900s have produced the most captivating coverage of politics and politicians in the nation's history. Here's the fourth in CJR's year-long series — the Twenty-first Century Project.

by James Boylan



LUIS S. HOUSTON

LOGO ART/ROB HARELL

MOYNIHAN, AP/WIDEWORLD; KEN CEDENO

CJR index

People — and (in bold) organizations, publications, and broadcasts — in this issue are listed along with the first page of the article in which each is mentioned.

ABC	51	Des Moines Register	6	Kinsley, Michael	11	Newsweek	10, 17, 33	Sreenivasan, Sreenath	
ABCNews.com	35	Dickerson, Nancy	51	Klose, Kevin	47	Niagara Gazette	13	St. Louis Post-Dispatch	12
Alter, Jonathan	10	Dine, Thomas	46	Knight, John S.	57	Nocera, Joseph	11		
Altheide, David	6	Disney	17	Kuntz, Phil	61	Novak, Robert	51	St. Paul Pioneer Press	49
Amazon.com	17	Donaldson, Sam	51	Lancet	16	Ogden, Christopher	55		
American Statesman	21	Drudge, Matt	11, 17	Las Vegas Review-Journal	43	Online News Association	11	Stanger, Howard	21, 41
Andersen, Kurt	11, 34	Dyson, Esther	50	Lashinsky, Adam	27	Orlando Sentinel	11	Stanley News & Press	25
Anderson, Paul Y.	50	Easterbrook, Gregg	11	Lawrence, David	49	Oskaloosa Herald	40	Starr, Ken	14
Anderson, Susan	21	Economic Daily News	61	Lemann, Nicholas	10	Pahis, Stratos	13	Stern Publishing Co.	36
AP	24, 50	Editor & Publisher	21	Lennon, John	46	Pearson, Drew	14	Stone, Vernon	12
Apple Jr., R.W.	62	Egan, Leo	50	Leo	22	Peck, Abe	26	Tahlequah Daily Press	26
Arizona State U.	6	Feder, Robert	22	Lessard, Suzannah	11	Peladeau, Pierre	52		
ASNE	30	Fontanarosa, Phil B.	8	Liberty Group Publishing	13	Pegler Jr., Westbrook	48	TheStreet.com	11, 22, 37
Atlanta Journal-Constitution	8	Fortune	11, 27, 61	Liebling, A.J.	17	Perdue, Lewis	22	Thomas, Helen	51
Atlantic Monthly	10	Fox News Online	34	Lionheart Newspapers	14	Perlman, David	16	Thomson Newspapers Inc.	12, 52
Augusta Chronicle	43	Frankel, Max	49	Lippmann, Walter	49, 58	Peters, Charlie	10	Thomson, Ken	52
Baird, John L.	17	Frederick, Pauline	51	Lipsyte, Robert	62	Peters, Dave	41	Tilove, Jonathan	39
Baker, Russell	48	Freyre, Fabio	53	Lorch, Donatella	31	Peterson, Alyssa	12	Time Inc.	24, 53
Ball State U.	26	Frias, Luz Maria	39	Los Angeles Times	9, 17, 61	Philadelphia Daily News	8	TIME.com	50
Barnicle, Mike	42	Friendly, Fred	50	Lott, Trent	46	Philadelphia Inquirer	55	Times Mirror	11
Beaubien, François de Gaspé	53	Fulton Jr., Lewis	50	Louima, Abner	62	Philadelphia Record	49	Times of Acadiana	12
Bell, Jack	50	Gannett	13, 24	Luce, Henry R.	50	Philadelphia	9	Time-Warner	17, 26
Benton, Charles	9	Gates, Bill	34	Lundberg, George	16	Phillip, David Graham	49	Toledo Blade	22
Berkshire Eagle	29	Gauvreau, Emile	56	Lynch, Elizabeth	21	Plain Dealer	43	Toronto Star	52
Bernstein, Carl	48	Gazette	43	Macfadden, Bernarr	56	Poniewozik, James	12	Toronto Sun	53
Bernstein, Leonard	9	Geisler, Jill	31	Marconi, Guglielmo	17	Poughkeepsie Journal	21	Torstar	53
Black, Conrad	52	Gerth, Jeff	51	Martin, Ralph	13	Poynter Institute	31	Tripp, Linda	36
Bloomberg News	62	Gilder, George	17	McGraw-Hill	26	Prince, Rod	39	Turner, Ted	17
Boca Raton News	13	Giles, Robert	30	McGrory, Mary	51	Public Agenda	42	U. of Maryland	28
Boston Globe	42	Glass, Richard M.	8	McLaughlin	40	Public Opinion	58	U. of Missouri	26
Bowden, Mark	43	Glass, Stephen	42	Media Studies Center	30	Quebecor	52	U.S. News & World Report	10
Bradlee, Ben	50	Globe and Mail	52, 53	Mencken, H.L.	48	Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty	44	USA Today	11, 51, 52
British Medical Journal	16	Godfrey, Paul	53	Miami Herald	22	Raines, Howell	11	Varmus, Harold	16
Bronner, David	13	Goldman, Henry	62	Microsoft	17	Reston, James	49	Varner, Bill	21
Bronson, Howard	6	Green, George J.	53	Miller, Alan	61	Reynolds, Colleen	43	Voakes, Paul	30
Brookings Institution	46	Greenfield, Jeff	51	Miller, Keith	31	Reynolds, Janet	13	Voice of America	44
Browne, Don	30	Greenfield, Meg	51	Mobile Press Register	6	Roanoke Times	43	Wade, Nicholas	16
Brugmann, Bruce	13	Hamit, Francis	9	Moeller, Susan	58	Roberts, Gene	28	Waldman, Steven	11
Buckley Jr., William F.	50	Hammond, Ruth	31	Mother Jones	51	Rolling Stone	42	Wall Street Journal	
Buffalo State U.	25	Hancock, Lynell	33	Ms.	51	Ross, Steven	27	Interactive Edition	11
Bunting, Glenn	61	Harper's	42	MSNBC	11, 22, 35	Rowan, Carl T.	51	Wall Street Journal	27, 61
Burson, Pat	41	Hartford Advocate	12	Murdoch, Rupert	36	Roe, Sam	22	Walters, Barbara	51
Business Week	27	Hartford Courant	12	Murrow, Edward R.	17, 50	RTNDA	26	Washington Monthly	10
Byron, Christopher	22	Harting, Don	33	Nabors, Mary Scott	21	Salon	12, 34	Washington Post	16, 50, 61
Candler, Earl	51	Hattiesburg American	32	National Public Radio	16	San Francisco Bay Guardian	13	WBBM-TV	21
Carter, Boake	50	Hearst	27, 53	National Review	50	San Francisco Chronicle	16	WCPO-TV	30
Castro, Janice	11	Heller, William Randolph	49	NBC Nightly News	39	San Jose Mercury News	27, 39, 43	Weaver, David	30
CBS	51	Hells, Jamie	11	NBC	17, 30, 51	Sanders, Marlene	51	Welsh, David	33
Ceppos, Jerry	43	Helms, Jesse	46	Negroponte, Nicholas	17	Schlender, Brent	61	Wicker, Tom	50
Chaney, Marti	33	Herrick, Dennis S.	14	New England Journal of Medicine	16	Seamans, Ike	30	Wilhoit, G. Cleveland	50
Charlotte Observer	37	Hillan, Peter B.	27	New Republic	11, 42	Security Technology & Design Magazine	9	Wilkins, Roger	51
Chicago Sun-Times	22	Hollinger	13, 52	New Times Corp.	12	Shapiro, Walter	11	Wilkinson, Signe	8
Chicago Tribune	49	Honderich, John	52	New York Evening Post	49	Shenk, Joshua Wolf	11	Willman, David	61
Childs, Marquis	50	Householder, Mike	39	New York Herald Tribune	28	Shipp, E.R.	51	Winchell, Walter	17
Clapper, Raymond	50	I.F. Stone's Weekly	50	New York Post	49	Simpson, Glenn	61	Winston-Salem Journal	39
CNN	28, 35	Indiana U.	30	New York Review of Books	10, 17	Simpson, O.J.	62	Witcover, Jules	51
Collier's Weekly	49	Isikoff, Michael	36	New York Times	11, 16, 17, 28, 31, 49, 56, 61, 62	Singleton, William Dean	29	WITI-TV	31
Community Newspaper Holdings Inc.	13	JAMA	8, 16	New Yorker	10, 34	Slate	11	WJBC-AM	43
Condé Nast	27	Jaroslovsky, Rich	11	Newhouse News Service	39	Smith, Merriman	50	Women.com	27
Cook, Rhonda	8	Jerusalem Post	53	Newsday	26	Smith, Patricia	42	Woodward, Bob	48
Cosmopolitan	49	Journal of the American Medical Assoc.	16			Sodomka, Dennis	43	Woodward, Ed	22
Cranberg, Gil	6	Atlanta Journal-Constitution	38			Spain, Karl	22	Woodward, Louise	62
Croft, Jack	31	Kaltenborn, H.V.	50			Spencer, Clark	22	Worldnet	44
Daily Advertiser	12	Kandel, Myron	28			Squires, Sally	16	WTVJ-TV	30
Daily Hampshire Gazette	21	Kansas City Star	43					Zanger, Stuart	30
Daily News	49	Kaplan, Eliot	9					Zieman, Mark	43
Dalpino, Catharin	46	Kasparov, Garry	35					Zobell, Charles	43
Davis, Elmer	50	Kempton, Murray	48						
Deidman, Bill	62	King, Mike	38						
DeIveccio, Chris	14								

THANKS TO PHILLIPS, WEARY TRAVELERS
WILL ALWAYS HAVE A PLACE TO STOP AND REFUEL.



By donating a former plant site to the Cactus Playa Lake Project, Phillips Petroleum helped expand and protect the habitat of hundreds of thousands of migratory birds. The project resulted from the cooperative effort of Phillips, wildlife and conservation agencies and the

community of Cactus, Texas. Now bald eagles, waterfowl and dozens of other bird species have a better place to rest along the Central Flyway. It's yet another example of what it means to be The Performance Company.

PHILLIPS PETROLEUM COMPANY



For a copy of our annual report, call 918-661-3700, write to: Phillips Annual Report, B-41, Adams Bldg., Bartlesville, OK 74004, or visit us at www.phillips66.com.

letters

JUDGING THE JUDGES

In your article "Inside the Pulitzers" (CJR, May/June), you refer to the *Mobile Register's* entry, which outlined problems in Alabama and suggested solutions to those problems. You state that "it was the favorite of nearly all the jurors," and that had been confirmed to us by one of the jurors. It had also been confirmed that one of the jurors pointed out that the series did not culminate in an editorial endorsement in the governor's race.

The purpose of the series was not to lead up to endorsing a candidate, but to create an awareness in the state of the problems that have held us back and to suggest solutions to those problems. We feel that the series accomplished its goal. We also published two editorials in which we clearly stated why we did not endorse in the race. In a nutshell, neither candidate was worthy of the backing of this newspaper.

You state that not endorsing was a copout and the moral of the story is to "stay the course, have the courage of your convictions." I would say, to the contrary, the moral of the story is if the jurors have a question, a simple phone call could have informed them. It's a shame that the best entry didn't win because the judges didn't have inquiring minds.

HOWARD BRONSON
Publisher
Mobile Press Register
Mobile, Alabama

Your look inside the Pulitzers perhaps revealed more about the judging than you intended. One judge, for instance, said he found himself "looking for results, as a way to separate competing entries. If an entry showed good work, but had no consequences, I would find myself gravitating to another entry that had impact."

Results occur outside the newsroom. So if a community happens to be a hotbed of bigotry, an extraordinary exposé of mistreatment of gays would

fall on deaf ears, and there'd be no measurable results. A paper would deserve all the credit in the world for tackling certain subjects in a hostile environment, but under a results yardstick, there'd be no Pulitzers.

Apparently, many of the Pulitzer entries this year were first-rate. I have to wonder, though, about some of the judging.

GIL CRANBERG
Former editor of the *Des Moines Register's* editorial pages
Des Moines, Iowa

MISSING THE POINT

In coming to the conclusion that "news-people and the editorial people of the mainstream press performed valiantly and expertly" ("How the Monica Story Played in Mid-America," CJR, May/June), Michael Gartner misses the point. Perhaps Gartner should reread Jules Witcover's critical piece on where the news media went wrong (CJR, March/April 1998). But even that was an understatement.

DAVID ALTHEIDE
Regents, Professor
School of Justice Studies
Arizona State University
Tempe, Arizona

GIVING A GIRL A CHANCE

Richard Marschall did your readership a favor by reviewing America's great twentieth-century cartoonists and reminding us of the power these little drawings have to illustrate an age. Still, it made me tired to have our profession segregated into male and female, black and white practitioners of the trade.

I am not just a descendant of Lou Rogers and Edwina Dunn, two of the many fine women cartoonists who (among other things) cartooned tirelessly for the right to vote (arguably, even a more noble reward than a Pulitzer paperweight). When I got started cartooning I'd never heard of Lou Rogers and Edwina

COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW

PUBLISHER
DAVID LAVENTHOL

EDITOR
MARSHALL LOEB
MANAGING EDITOR
GLORIA COOPER

SENIOR EDITOR
MIKE HOYT

EDITOR AT LARGE
NEIL HICKEY

ART DIRECTOR
NANCY NOVICK

ASSISTANT EDITOR
NICHOLAS STEIN

ONLINE PRODUCER
PETER LEONARD

RESEARCH ASSOCIATES
HAL COHEN, MARGARET KENNEDY,
COREY WELFORD

EDITORIAL/PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
TOM O'NEILL

ASSISTANT TO PUBLISHER/EDITOR
SUSAN TEITZ

INTERNS
SHEELA V. PAI, ELIZABETH WERNER

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
JAMES BOYLAN, D.D. GUTTENPLAN,
CHRISTOPHER HANSON,
JOE HOLLEY, TRUDY LIEBERMAN,
MICHAEL MASSING, BRUCE PORTER,
PAUL STAROBIN, STEVE WEINBERG

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER
DENNIS F. GIZA

BUSINESS ASSISTANT
KATHLEEN BROW

CJR IS A MEMBER OF
THE LEADERSHIP NETWORK
TERI SCHURE, CHAIRPERSON
212 375 1575

FOUNDING PUBLISHER
EDWARD W. BARRETT (1910-1989)

EDITORIAL ADVISERS
PHILIP S. BALBONI, JIM CAREY, BARBARA COCHRAN, ROBERT CURVIN, ARTHUR GELB, ALEX JONES, JONATHAN Z. LARSEN, JOHN LEO, JANICE C. SIMPSON, SALLY BEDELL SMITH, JUDY WOODRUFF

COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW
JOURNALISM BUILDING
2950 BROADWAY
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10027

ADVERTISING: (212) 854-3958
BUSINESS: (212) 854-2716
SUBSCRIPTIONS: (888) 425-7782

Civic Journalism is ...

About expanding our vision.

Sometimes journalists are seen as being part of an unholy alliance with the powers that be. And we do suffer from a myopia simply because constant deadlines make it hard to get away from the bountiful sources of information that reside in government or corporate buildings.

Civic journalism is an antidote to that myopia. It compels us to go outside and bring our communities into our building.

For example, KQED, with other news organizations in the Bay Area, set out to look at transportation issues. Ordinarily, we get our information from transportation agencies, pressure groups or our own commutes. But we held town hall meetings for a year and we gained a richer understanding of how complex the situation is. It made us smarter, gave us more sources, enabled us to ask the right questions and gave focus to our coverage that I don't believe we would have achieved through more traditional methods. And the people who came out gave us credit for listening to their views.

We don't abandon journalism to pursue civic journalism. We retain the values of critical thinking, skepticism and the desire to search for a better, more accurate story. But we have better tools for making that search. And we gain credibility. People see we're not in an unholy alliance with anyone except those who help in our search for truth.



Raul Ramirez
News Director
KQED-FM, San Francisco

The Pew Center for Civic Journalism is pleased to present this message, another in a series on how journalists are trying to improve news coverage by involving citizens -- and improve the community through their work. For more information, call 202-331-3200.



Pew Center for Civic Journalism

Jan Schaffer
director

Jack Nelson
chairman

1101 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 420
Washington, DC 20036
www.pewcenter.org

COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW

PUBLISHED BY THE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

TOM GOLDSTEIN
DEAN

◆
COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW
GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES
GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM THE
FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS AND
ORGANIZATIONS:

◆
AT & T FOUNDATION

CABOT FAMILY CHARITABLE TRUST

THE FORD FOUNDATION

LYN AND NORMAN LEAR

THE JOHN D. AND CATHERINE T.
MACARTHUR FOUNDATION

THE NEW YORK TIMES
COMPANY FOUNDATION

N.J. NICHOLAS JR.

THE SAUL AND JANICE POLIAK
CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF
FIRST AMENDMENT ISSUES

Columbia Journalism Review (ISSN 0010 - 194X) is published bimonthly under the auspices of the faculty, alumni, and friends of the Graduate School of Journalism, Columbia University. Volume XXXVIII, Number 2 July/August 1999. Copyright © 1999 Graduate School of Journalism, Columbia University. Subscription rates: one year \$19.95; two years \$34.95; three years \$47.95. Canadian and foreign subscriptions, add \$4 per year. Back issues: \$5.50. Please address all subscription mail to: Columbia Journalism Review, Subscription Service Department, P.O. Box 578, Mt. Morris, IL 61054; (888) 425-7782. Editorial office: Journalism Building, Columbia University, New York, N.Y. 10027; (212) 854-1881. Business office: Journalism Building, Columbia University, New York, N.Y. 10027; (212) 854-2716. Periodical postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing office. No claims for back copies honored after one year. National newsstand distribution: Eastern News Distributors, Inc., 2020 Superior St., Sandusky, Ohio 44870. Postmaster: send Form 3579 to Columbia Journalism Review, P.O. Box 578, Mt. Morris, IL 61054. Printed in the U.S.A.

Dunn. I had heard of Tony Auth and modeled my work slavishly on his. Ed Sorel offered advice and the work of many other male cartoonists I'd never met offered inspiration. I am their descendant, too, just as they are as much Lou Roger's and Edwina Dunn's descendants as I am.

Someday, journalists and the publications they write for might give a girl a chance to be considered as just a plain old cartoonist, rather than a Woman Cartoonist. My readers do. They begin their hate mail, "Dear Mr. Wilkinson . . ."

SIGNE WILKINSON

Philadelphia Daily News
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

PRESCRIPTIVE ETHICS

We want to set the record straight on an item regarding a study published in the February 10, 1999, issue of *The Journal of the American Medical Association* about the prevalence of sexual dysfunction in the United States ("Darts & Laurels," *CJR*, May/June).

The research study was funded by the National Institutes of Health and a grant from the Ford Foundation; this information was disclosed in the article. Pfizer, Inc., the makers of Viagra, was not involved in the funding of this study.

Outside the specific study, one of the three authors of the *JAMA* study has served on the Scientific Advisory Committee to Pfizer, and another author has received research and consulting support from Pfizer and several other drug companies.

JAMA has a policy of routinely disclosing research funding and any related financial interests of the researchers because of the potential for a conflict of interest. We did disclose the research funding at the end of the article, but we did not disclose two of the three authors' ties to a number of pharmaceutical companies outside of this particular research study due to a clerical error. We published a correction at the earliest opportunity (April 7, 1999).

PHIL B. FONTANAROSA, M.D.

RICHARD M. GLASS, M.D.

Interim coeditors, *JAMA*
Chicago, Illinois

CORRECTIONS IN CALIFORNIA

In your May/June story, "Life on the Prison Beat," Rhonda Cook, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution's* prison writer,

states that "the largest prison systems — California, Texas, and Florida — those systems aren't covered. Frank Green of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* and I should have some competition out there. But we don't, and it makes me sad."

Cook is merely ill-informed. Two *Los Angeles Times* reporters, Mark Arax and Mark Gladstone, spent nine months last year investigating California's prison system. Their work follows years of aggressive prison coverage and numerous special projects on the state corrections system. The two dozen stories we published in 1998 resulted in the following reforms (to name just a few):

- The state Department of Corrections halted a policy allowing prison guards to shoot unarmed inmates involved in fistfights. Until the *Times's* stories, California was the only state with such a policy, resulting in the deaths of thirty-nine inmates and the wounding of more than 200 over the past decade. There has not been a single death or wounding by gunshot in the state's prison system since.

- Five prison guards were indicted in connection with the repeated rape of an inmate who was locked in the cell of a hulking sexual predator for two days as a lesson in obedience.

- An independent panel of three retired law enforcement officers found that twenty-four of the thirty-one fatal or serious

COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW

The *Columbia Journalism Review* welcomes your thoughts and opinions. You can write to us at:

Columbia Journalism Review
Columbia University
Journalism Building
2950 Broadway
New York, N.Y. 10027

Telephone: (212) 854 1881

Fax: (212) 854 8580

e-mail: CJR@COLUMBIA.EDU

You can find our Web site at
[HTTP://WWW.CJR.ORG](http://WWW.CJR.ORG)

If you'd like us to consider your letter for publication, please include your full name, street address, and telephone number. Letters are, of course, subject to editing for clarity and space.

shootings it reviewed at Corcoran State Prison were not justified.

• A new state prison watchdog law was enacted after six days of legislative hearings. More funds were allocated to beef up internal investigations.

LEONARD BERNSTEIN

State editor

Los Angeles Times

Los Angeles, California

SO, WHERE'S THE PROBLEM?

Having just got my May/June 1999 issue of *CJR*, I was a bit amused at your article urging better coverage of the now well-known Year 2000 computer bug problem.

I've done eight articles on this problem, all of them for limited circulation trade magazines. I made several attempts to widen this coverage to mainstream publications and was told either that the topic was too esoteric, too obscure, or that that particular editor didn't believe that it was a problem because, surely, someone, somewhere was working on a "magic bullet" miracle that would make it a non-story. In the meantime there has been as much misinformation as hard information. Getting the word out last year or before would have been a public service in the best tradition of journalism.

FRANCIS HAMIT

Contributing editor

Security Technology & Design Magazine

Los Angeles, California

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

Concerning your recent Dart to *Philadelphia* magazine's Gay Mummer satire, let me briefly elaborate on the intent of the story. The journalistic spoof has a rich tradition, most memorably George Plimpton's famous story in *Sports Illustrated* about Sidd Finch, the miraculous Mets pitching discovery who supposedly could throw the ball 168 miles an hour. More recently, such respected and diverse publications as *GQ*, *Mother Jones*, *Esquire*, and *Icon* have all given their readers deadpan spoofs on subjects ranging from the hot new Hollywood blockbuster *God* to a fashion line for the homeless.

All too often publications are unintentionally funny. If our story failed, perhaps it was because we were unintentionally serious.

By and large, we were much more successful in our journalistic ventures, as

evidenced by the two National Magazine Awards (five nominations total) along with a few dozen Sigma Delta Chi, Headliner, Clarion, and city and regional magazine awards for writing and reporting accrued during my seven years as editor.

ELIOT KAPLAN

Former editor

Philadelphia magazine

Media, Pennsylvania

CORPORATE WELFARE

Journalism professionals reading Lawrence Grossman's take on the Presidential Advisory Committee on Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters ("Making a Mess of Digital TV," *CJR*, March/April) should get a good sense of one of the biggest missed stories of the decade. The committee, also known as the "Gore Commission," delivered a set of recommendations to Vice President Gore in December 1998 outlining what broadcasters should deliver to communities in return for a gift from the public worth \$70 billion.

The power of the commission was in its potential to find consensus between public interest advocates and broadcasters in defining the compact between television station owners and the communities they are licensed to serve. To that end, the commission was very successful in setting shared goals for how television in the digital age can meet community needs concerning education, civic discourse, accessibility for the disabled, diversity of viewpoints, and disclosure of public interest activity. This agreement is significant and sets the baseline for the real battle: a rulemaking conducted by the Federal Communications Commission that will clearly define the public interest compact.

The problem remains that the public is unaware of and uninvolved in this golden opportunity to define public interest opportunities in the digital age of television. Fair, accurate, and continuing coverage of this issue could prepare the public for its rightful role to define what broadcasters owe in return for one of the most blatant examples of corporate welfare on record.

CHARLES BENTON

Chairman

Benton Foundation

Chicago, Illinois

NATIONAL
PRESS **NPF**
FOUNDATION

Washington Financial Institutions & Economic Forecasts

A Program for Journalists

October 3 - 6, 1999

12 All-Expenses Paid Fellowships Available

Understanding how the nation's and the world's financial institutions make decisions, analyze data and predict the near future can be complicated and dizzying endeavors. This program for print and broadcast journalists, now in its 9th year, is a well-known source of accurate, straightforward and useful information. Top speakers from the SEC, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Department of Commerce, top companies, etc. Some of the topics for 1999 include:

- The 1999-2000 Economic Outlook
- The Global Economy
- Consumer Credit & Debt
- The Impact of Mergers
- When Will The Market Start to Fall?
- How to Read a Financial Statement
- Story Idea Sessions & Journalists' Roundtable

Like all NPF programs, this one is on-the-record, with plenty of time for discussion. **Organized by NPF as one of our "Fundamentals of ..." programs**, this intense, 4-day program will bring in senior people from government, legislative groups, trade associations and the like. **Twelve all-expenses paid fellowships are available to qualified journalists.** Fellowships include airfare, hotel, meals and materials.

There is no application form. You can apply by mail, e-mail or fax. To apply, send a letter stating why you wish to attend, a letter of support from your supervisor, a brief bio, and a clip or tape (if you're an editor send a sample of work you've edited). Applications will not be returned. **Application deadline is September 3.** Send applications to National Press Foundation, Economics Program, 1211 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 310, Washington, D.C. 20036. E-mail is npf@natpress.org. Fax is 202-530-2855. Call for information at 202-721-9106. Check our website at www.natpress.org.

Underwritten by grants from Investment Company Institute and the Nasdaq Stock Market

The National Press Foundation is a
non-profit educational foundation.

CJRupfront

MAGAZINES

A NEOLIBERAL TUNE-UP

How Charlie Peters Plans to Keep The Washington Monthly on Track

It's one of the longest-running parlor games in the Washington media whirl: guessing when Charlie Peters, 72, the legendarily cantankerous founder and editor of the thirty-year-old *Washington Monthly*, will pass on his small but hugely influential publication to a successor. After years of considering offers from outside investors — and after many rumors that he would leave his editorship in the hands of writer Nicholas Lemann, 44, a former *Monthly* editor — Peters finally has an exit strategy.

With the support of Peters, Lemann is working on a plan that would turn the magazine, circulation roughly 28,000, into a nonprofit organization, a move that would allow it to seek foundation funding. Once that happens, Lemann and James Fallows,

49, another prominent *Monthly* alumnus, would try to raise enough money to keep it viable.

Lemann, however, does not intend to take over editorial duties. If all goes as planned, he will function more or less as chairman of the *Monthly*'s board, which would involve hiring a chief editor every three to five years and loosely overseeing the affairs of the magazine, as well as running its fundraising. Fallows, the former editor of *U.S. News & World Report*, may function as Lemann's co-chair (he is now working on a short-term software project for Microsoft). Peters says there is a "90 percent chance" that responsibility for the magazine will shift to Lemann well before the end of next year.

Best known for his writing in *The Atlantic Monthly* and *The New York Review of Books*, Lemann is also the author of the acclaimed 1991 book *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America*. He recently finished another book about meritocracy in the U.S., and in April became a staff writer for *The New Yorker*.

The value of *The Washington Monthly*, Lemann says, is its "interplay of reporting and analysis, with the idea that it's an intellectual movement" — a movement he characterizes as "a kind of pragmatic, case-by-case liberalism."

With its debut in 1969, Peters and his magazine began helping to redefine liberalism by advocating a number of positions that at the time were more associated with right-wing Republicanism —



Charlie Peters

COURTESY WASHINGTON MONTHLY

enthusiastic support for entrepreneurship and a hard-line attitude toward criminals, for example. "It's impossible to remember how different the world was when he started the magazine," says another former *Monthly* editor, *Newsweek*'s Jonathan Alter. The *Monthly*'s advocacy of so-called neoliberalism — around the magazine's office, it's long been called simply "The Gospel" — has helped to influence the Democratic party's shift toward the center over the last two decades.

A typical *Monthly* article follows a two-part formula: the writer first analyzes why something in government — the Department of Education, say, or campaign finance legislation — isn't working, and then offers a detailed, forceful plan for how the problem can be fixed.

Not everyone likes this formula. In February 1996, when Fallows's here's-what's-wrong-with-journalism book, *Breaking the News*, was getting a lot of



Nicholas Lemann

GASPAR TENCALÉ

attention, Howell Raines of *The New York Times* wrote a signed editorial-page piece calling Fallows and Peters carriers of something he diagnosed as "Washington Monthly Disease." This for trying to be, as Raines put it, "public policy missionaries" and using "journalism as a convenient cover."

Lemann agrees that political agendas should not influence articles put forth as objective reporting. But the *Monthly*, he says, has never pretended to be anything other than what it is: a magazine that seeks to change the way Americans think about public policy issues.

Lemann doesn't plan to change the magazine's time-tested formula, though he is quick to point out that he's "not the same exact person as Charlie." One thing he does want to change is the budget for reporting. The mandate of the magazine, Lemann says, "is to send people out into the field to do firsthand reporting on how government is working." Because of the magazine's pinched budget, he says, "the field" is usually limited to "Prince George's County, Maryland."

One measure of Peters's enormous influence on U.S. journalism is the list of distinguished former *Monthly* editors. The list includes *Slate* editor Michael Kinsley, *USA Today* columnist Walter Shapiro, former *Newsweek* writer Steven Waldman, *New Yorker* contributor Suzannah Lessard, *Fortune* editor-at-large Joseph Nocera, *New Republic* senior editor Gregg Easterbrook, and up-and-coming *New York Times* reporter Amy Waldman. Peters pays his young editors horribly (the current rate is — this is not a typo — \$12,000 a year) and works them very hard. But the *Monthly* has had a bigger impact on both politics and journalism than magazines with staffs (and salaries) ten times as big.

Several former *Monthly* editors wonder aloud whether Peters is emotionally capable of giving up *Monthly*. "Charlie is tied to the magazine in a very deep way," says Joshua Wolf Shenk, a *Monthly* editor from 1995 to 1996. But under the plan, Peters will continue writing his column, "Tilting at Windmills," which opens each issue. He'll also devote much time to his recently established foundation, Understanding Government, which he created, he says, "to do something about the abysmal state of reporting about the executive branch."

—Andrew Hearst

Hearst (hearst@echonyc.com) is a writer who lives in New York.

ONLINE JOURNALISM

NEW MEDIA, OLD VALUES

An Association Works Toward the "Highest Possible Standards"

In *Turn of the Century*, Kurt Andersen's expansive new novel for the Internet Age, hackers break into the Reuters database and file a fictitious account of Bill Gates's disappearance while scuba diving. Within seconds, Internet stock trades flood the market and Microsoft shares plummet, forcing the NASDAQ to halt trading. The humor of this scenario lies in its inherent plausibility. At a time when Matt Drudge influences tomorrow's headlines, when MSNBC.com asks visitors to rate its

forty, gathered for a panel discussion titled "Online News! What is it Good For?" The audience listened as Jaroslovsky, ONA's president; Jamie Heller, the executive editor of *TheStreet.com* and ONA's treasurer; and Janice Castro, editor of *TIME.com* and ONA's secretary, outlined the challenges facing online journalism today, and the role the new organization hopes to play in the medium's evolution.

Over the course of the evening and in subsequent interviews, the panelists tried to address some of these concerns:

ONA's officers, from left to right: Janice Castro, Jamie Heller, and Rich Jaroslovsky



news stories, and when red-ink-stained Internet companies carry market valuations north of General Electric, anything seems possible.

"Online journalism is still the wild, wild West," says Rich Jaroslovsky, managing editor of *The Wall Street Journal Interactive Edition*. "The concern is that this 'anything goes' mentality doesn't spill into the news coverage." To allay such fears, Jaroslovsky and other prominent Web-based journalists have launched the Online News Association (ONA), a professional organization styled after the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) and the Radio-Television News Directors Association (RTNDA). Its mission: to encourage "the highest possible standards in this new medium."

On a muggy evening in May, in a casual Indian restaurant in Manhattan, the ONA held its first official function. Nearly 100 attendees, most of them well under

Who Is An Online Journalist?

The Internet has enabled individuals with little or no journalistic training or experience to transmit their findings, spurious or otherwise, to millions. Non-journalistic Web sites like Yahoo!, America Online, and bn.com, the Barnes & Noble site, have people doing work that is essentially journalistic in nature, from writing stories to choosing relevant links. So who has the right to call himself an online journalist? The ONA has opted for an expansive definition, at least in terms of who can join the organization: "It is the job, and not the environment, that defines who is eligible," says Jaroslovsky. "You can't go by the site, or by our own opinion of the quality of the work."

Gaps in the Chinese Wall

In many online operations, both journalists and their supervisors are young and have never been immersed in the traditional news culture that keeps ad and edi-

torial functions a respectable distance apart. And since many online operations are small, the two sides often share the same cramped space. As such, the opportunity for blurring the invisible line between them is greater. In addition, the design of the medium sometimes makes ads and editorial indistinguishable. "Readers are more accustomed to knowing what an ad looks like in newspaper and magazines," Heller says. The ONA is working on the creation of online advertising guidelines. Had such guidelines been in place, Castro muses, the ubiquitous practice of spreading banner ads across the home pages of most sites might have been discouraged.

The Digital Focus Group

For years, editors have used focus groups to discern the wishes of readers. But the technology of online journalism makes it dramatically easier to do so, increasing the temptation to pander to readers' tastes. Online editors now have the ability to calculate, almost instantaneously, exactly how many readers look at each article on their site and how long they spend there. James Poniewozik, media columnist for *Salon*, wondered in a recent column whether, "as we get better and better at giving readers exactly what they want, what will be the percentage in trying to give readers what we think they need?"

The ONA hopes to start an industry-wide conversation on this subject. At the *Journal*, Jaroslovsky says, reader measurements often have expanded rather than narrowed the range of content. In one case, he added Kuala Lumpur to his site's list of top stock markets after several requests from subscribers. "I began to realize that though the numbers of people who were interested were small, the intensity of their interest was enormous."

The ONA also plans to create prizes for quality online journalism.

While groups like the Internet Content Coalition and the News Rating Council have addressed Internet issues before, the ONA is the first explicitly journalistic organization to do so, says Sreenath Sreenivasan, who teaches new media at Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism. Jaroslovsky feels that the print backgrounds of ONA's founders have schooled them in the core "values" of traditional journalism, which they hope to impart to their new medium.

—Nicholas Stein

Stein is CJR's assistant editor.

OWNERSHIP

THE NEW HARMONICS IN HARTFORD

When the Daily Buys the Weekly, Where's the "Alternative"?

New Mass. Media, which includes the *Hartford Advocate* and four other alternative weeklies, is the

nation's fifth largest alternative weekly chain, with total circulation of 270,000.

Its sale in mid-April to *The Hartford Courant* and the *Courant's* corporate parent, Times Mirror, raises a vexing question: When your local alternative weekly and the local daily are both part of the same company, to what is the weekly an alternative?

Alternative weeklies are increasingly well-to-do, and they have gone through plenty of mergers and acquisitions amongst themselves, with New Times Corp. and Stern Publishing Company the biggest buyers (CJR, March/April). Mainstream dailies have also bought a few alternatives in distant markets before.

But the *Courant's* purchase of the *Advocate* is only the second time a U.S. daily has bought out the alternative in the same city. (*The Daily Advertiser*, owned by Thomson Newspapers, Inc., bought the alternative *Times of Acadiana* in Lafayette, Louisiana, last September.) At its annual convention in May, the Association of Alternative Newsweeklies debated (and postponed a decision on) the question of whether to expel the five New Mass. Media papers, since its by-laws outlaw ownership by dailies. But the larger question on the floor was about monopoly ownership, and equally pressing, whether ownership of an alternative weekly by a community's mainstream daily makes hollow the notion of the weekly's alternative voice.



In business terms, the buyout makes sense. *Hartford Advocate* publisher Francis Zankowski has seen circulation increase 16 percent and retail display ads rise 100 percent over the five years he's been there. For the past three years, the *Courant* has been printing the *Advocate* and, as Zankowski observes, the *Courant's* managers certainly had time to notice such growth. And it can't have escaped the *Courant's* attention that many of its entertainment ads had migrated to the *Advocate*. As for the other four weeklies — the *New Haven Advocate*, the *Fairfield County Weekly*, the *Valley Advocate* (in Hatfield, Massachusetts), and the *Westchester (New York) County Weekly* — they are also thriving.

Does the *Hartford Courant/Hartford Advocate* part of the deal skate near the edge of antitrust law? Attorneys David Beizer of Hartford and Stephen Barnett, professor of law at the University of California, contend that it falls right through the ice. They are representing two plaintiffs in an antitrust suit filed in the federal district court of appeal in New York on April 21 against Times Mirror, the *Hartford Courant* Company, and New Mass. Media. The plaintiffs, advertiser Mitchell Auto Group and reader Alyssa Peterson, requested a preliminary injunction to block the sale, alleging that it would create a local print news and advertising monopoly. The injunction was denied on

May 19 but an appeal is pending, along with a counter-motion by the *Courant* to throw out the suit.

San Francisco Bay Guardian founder and publisher Bruce Brugmann has donated money to support the suit. "What daily papers are saying is, 'We can't get this progressive young audience, so we'll just buy it,'" says Brugmann. He sees almost "every alternative paper in peril," since a successful business built on alternative and daily "synergy" in one market could lead to a wave of future buyouts. Connecticut attorney general Richard Blumenthal was still reviewing details of the sale in early June, but careful observers say he is likely to wave it through, as did the Federal Trade Commission and the Justice Department, which gave antitrust clearance on April 26.

Crucial to the plaintiffs' allegation of antitrust violations is the definition of a market, since, as lawyer Barnett points out, the Clayton Antitrust Act prohibits mergers that substantially lessen competition *within a market*. "The defendant says daily and weekly papers are in completely separate markets," he says. "We think they do compete for readers and advertisers."

Stephen Axinn, of Axinn, Veltrop, and Harkrider, the firm hired to defend the new owners, says there is well-established precedent for the contention that dailies and weeklies don't compete. Also, he notes that there are other media, from broadcast to direct mail.

Hartford Advocate editor Janet Reynolds applauds the suit. "Fabulous," she says. "I love those people." But she doesn't hold out a lot of hope for its success. "I think antitrust law is dead." And she chooses to remain "cautiously optimistic" about the change of ownership.

Will the journalism in these five alternatives — known for a reformist muckraking tone and for keeping an ear on the streets — be altered by the new owners? *Courant* executives have promised the New Mass. Media papers that they will remain editorially autonomous. "They know what they are doing, and it would be silly for us to change it," says *Courant* deputy publisher Lou Golden. But, "People move on, what happens then?" says *Advocate* managing editor Carole Bass. "My sense is that the bigger danger is five years down the road."

—Carly Berwick

Berwick is a free-lance writer.

NEWSPAPERS

SMALL LINKS, BIG CHAIN

Community Newspaper Holdings and the Power of the Cluster

Gannett, with a history dating to 1906, has long claimed to own more dailies (seventy-five, now) than any other newspaper company. No more. Gannett has been surpassed by a chain with a history that goes all the way back . . . to 1997.

Community Newspaper Holdings Inc. of Birmingham, Alabama, owns 96 dailies, along with 90 weeklies and 6 shoppers. It's a hungry chain, suddenly the most aggressive player in the industry. Of the 141 newspapers that changed hands in 1998, Community Newspaper bought 75, and already this year it has bought 45 more from Hollinger International. All of its holdings are small: with a circulation of 48,000, the Johnstown, Pennsylvania, *Tribune-Democrat* is the company's largest daily. Most of the rest are in the 13,000-25,000 range — from the *Niagara Gazette* in New York to the *Oskaloosa*

Newspapers, where he spent nineteen years. "Without question, clustering is the key for our business model," he says. Those papers the company picks up in group-buys that don't fit into a cluster, it tries to sell, as it is now doing with the *Boca Raton News*, in Florida.

Clustering generates the kind of profits that has attracted to the newspaper business such investors as David Bronner, the c.e.o. of Alabama's \$22 billion state pension fund, Retirement Systems of Alabama.

Community Newspaper is a private company, but Bronner is, in effect, its sole shareholder — thanks to his \$1.3 billion investment in the company. Martin compared the relationship between CNHI and the retirement fund to that of a homeowner and a bank holding the mortgage. Bronner, for his part, says he gets a higher payback on his media investments than he

would in the bond market, with less risk than the stock market. "The media as a whole provide for a steady daily cash flow," he says. "Newspapers also have a monopolistic quality that you don't have with other businesses."

Indeed, the power of clustering may be bringing a new kind of player to smaller-market journalism — investment companies with little history in the business. For example, Liberty Group Publishing, of Northbrook, Illinois, spun off in 1998 by the Leonard Green & Partners buyout firm, owns 65 dailies and 120 weeklies. Like Community Newspaper, it also gets financial backing from public pension funds, mainly in California, Michigan, and Pennsylvania. Banc One Capital Partners of Ohio, the venture capital arm of Banc One, the banking company, took over



Ralph Martin



David Bronner

Herald in Iowa to the *Tahlequah Daily Press* in Oklahoma.

In a sense, size doesn't matter. Ralph Martin, Community's c.e.o., criss-crosses the country looking for acquisitions to organize into local "clusters" — groups of newspapers that can cut costs by consolidating business operations, and that also can offer advertisers a larger single buy. Martin learned the technique at Thomson



NATIONAL PRESS NPF FOUNDATION

COVERING INSURANCE ISSUES

12 FULL SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED FOR 4-DAY PROGRAM

The National Press Foundation and The American College are offering 12 full fellowships to qualified journalists for our annual program on life insurance and consumer financial issues. The program will be held from September 12-15, 1999, on the campus of The American College, in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. The application deadline is August 13. This is the 4th year in a row the program has been offered.

The purpose of the program is to provide reporters, editors and producers with the opportunity to enhance their knowledge of life insurance and related consumer financial issues. The program will offer a balanced context for financial coverage. Seminar sessions will include information about the historical development of the insurance industry, its financial structure, product development and financial rating systems. A session on insurance industry terminology has been added. The current state of the industry will be examined in the context of contemporary public policy issues. The sessions will be highly participatory and always on-the-record.

To apply, applicants must send a letter stating why the applicant and his/her news organization would benefit from this program; a letter of support from a senior editor; a brief resume; and one clip on a financial topic. Applications will not be returned.

Send applications to Consumer Insurance Program, National Press Foundation, 1211 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 310, Washington, D.C. 20036. For information call 202-721-9106; the fax is 202-530-2855; the e-mail is npf@natpress.org. Check our website at www.natpress.org.

The program is funded through a grant from the Life and Health Insurance Foundation for Education, a non-profit organization devoted to educating the public about the role and value of life and health insurance. The American College is a non-profit, academically accredited institution. The National Press Foundation is an independent, non-profit, non-partisan organization offering professional development opportunities for journalists.

Westward Communications's chain of seventy newspapers in 1997. Lionheart Newspapers, a Fort Worth-based partnership that includes Weiss, Peck & Greer's Private Equity Group and Waller-Sutton Media Partners, has 49 papers, many in Texas.

Dennis S. Herrick, who has been watching Community Newspaper from his perch as a University of Iowa adjunct journalism professor, says the company is only one of several "newly emerging venture capital chains that are investing in newspapers solely because of the high profit margins and strong cash flows." Clustering is attracting these investment companies, and he worries that their purely financial approach may further erode the public's perception of the newspaper in society.

Community's Ralph Martin grants that some investment firms are into newspapers only temporarily, because the stock market has been volatile and portfolio managers are looking for "safe havens." But, he vows, Community Newspaper has "made a commitment to be in for the long haul." Part of that commitment, he says, is a "hands-off approach when it comes to the newsroom. Our only message given to each paper is to produce a good local newspaper."

Interviews with ten editors and publishers at randomly selected Community newspapers confirm that philosophy. All ten agreed that the company has neither interfered in the newsroom nor demanded increased profits, at least not so far. Several editors, in fact, said Community had improved the editorial by investing in it. Beth McLain, news editor of *The Stanly News & Press*, of Albemarle, North Carolina, says the company bought cameras and computers: "We run the paper the way we want, but now we have better equipment."

Brad Sugg, publisher of the *Tahlequah Daily Press*, says Community put "more money into the newspaper, which was sorely needed." Among other things, Sugg says, the company created an Oklahoma state news bureau, which provides stories and photos for Community Newspaper's more than 40 papers in that state.

—Aaron Moore
Moore is a free-lance writer (aj_moore@email.msn.com). For more on Community Newspaper Holdings, Inc., and a list of all its newspapers, see the WHO OWNS WHAT resource guide on CJR's Web site at www.cjr.org. The guide now includes twenty-eight companies. Moore is the reporter for the WHO OWNS WHAT guide.

FIRST AMENDMENT

FREE SPEECH: LOOK WHO'S FLUNKING

Taking on the High School Censor

Students at Rockville High School in Vernon, Connecticut, learned more than they wanted to know about press freedom last October: a public high school is a First Amendment-free zone. After careful research on the town's mayoral candidates, senior Chris DelVecchio, 18, a registered Republican, wrote an editorial for the school newspaper endorsing the Democratic incumbent. After the Republican town committee complained, the local school board drew up a policy forbidding public high school journalists from taking editorial positions on candidates or referendum issues.

"It's truly ironic," says Stratos Pahis, 17, soon to be a senior at Rockville, "for students to go from a class on the Constitution and the Bill of Rights to a newspaper where they're not allowed to express their opinions."

Nationally, censorship of high school newspapers has increased dramatically since 1988 — the year the U.S. Supreme Court decided *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier*. Before *Hazelwood*, schools had followed an earlier Supreme Court decision, under which officials could limit students' free expression only when such expression would disrupt school activities or invade the rights of others. *Hazelwood's* language is much looser: censorship of school-sponsored publications is permissible when "reasonably related to legitimate pedagogical concerns." Since 1988, school officials have been energetically enlarging this loophole. Two years ago, for example, a principal in Blue Springs, Missouri, under pressure from local storeowners, suppressed a student exposé on the widespread practice of selling cigarettes to minors. Far more typically, last year at Bellevue West High



GARY TUCKER/JOURNAL INQUIRY

Stratos Pahis with a draft of his bill.

School, near Omaha, a principal killed two stories, one about the difficulty of being a gay student in a conservative town, and another, part of a series on students' religions, about pagans.

In response, journalism organizations and educators have pushed state legislation that increases the free speech rights of high school student publications. Arkansas, California, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, and Massachusetts have passed such laws, and so far, none have been challenged in court. "States can always choose to offer more rights to their citizens than the Supreme Court does. They just can't provide less," says Mike Hiestand, an attorney for the Student Press Law Center, a nonprofit in Arlington, Virginia, that provides legal help to student journalists and journalism educators.

In Connecticut, Pahis and some friends decided to challenge censorship. Pahis — with the help of the law center and his state representative, Thomasina Clemons — wrote a bill titled "An Act Encouraging Student Journalism." The proposed legislation outlaws prior restraint except in cases of libel, slander, or other illegalities.

Many school administrators vigorously oppose expanding student freedoms. Jerome Auclair, principal of Southington High School, told the Connecticut House Education Committee that "anyone who advocates giving students near carte blanche in what they are allowed to say or publish supports the further erosion of discipline and values in our public schools." Legislators, responding to such arguments, added an amendment to the bill ensuring that administrators "may set limits for the publication or other expression of speech by students." Since that language defeated the entire purpose of Pahis's legislation, the students withdrew their bill in May.

In Illinois, also in May, a pro-student journalism bill met a similar demise. In Missouri, a proposed "anti-Hazelwood" law, which has been defeated several times in the past decade, was denied a hearing, although its backers are trying new strategies. In both Michigan and Nebraska, pro-student journalism bills are expected to come to the floor in the next legislative session — Michigan this fall, Nebraska in January.

Any expansion of student freedom of expression may be a tougher sell in the wake of the recent school shootings, as school officials worry about the consequences of an undisciplined school environment. "After Columbine was not an easy time to be pushing these things," observes Mark Goodman, executive director of the law center.

The Connecticut students, who plan to try again in the future, hope reason can overcome such fears. Stratos Pahis insists, "I don't think administrators should be afraid of what students have to say." Mark Olsen, Rockville High School's newspaper adviser, goes further, saying that it's not students' writing but "their silence that should make us afraid."

—Liza Featherstone

Featherstone is a free-lance writer who lives in Brooklyn.

LANGUAGE CORNER:

'WHOSE' YOU CAN USE

A superstition, still rather widely held, may have been at work here: "... in the province, the population of which consists predominantly of ethnic Albanians" The superstition is that no form of the pronoun "who," which is used for human beings, can stand in for a common noun, like "province," denoting a thing. It just ain't so; the use of "whose" for things has been around for centuries (the great H.W. Fowler cited Shakespeare and Milton in its defense) and, in sentences like the one above, is a lot more graceful than the alternative. "Of which" isn't wrong, but it often grates. So make it "... in the province, whose population ...," save the extra words, and avoid the pain in the ear.

—Evan Jenkins

For more of Language Corner, see CJR's Web site at www.cjr.org.



JOURNALISM FELLOWSHIPS

35TH ANNUAL COMPETITION

Applications are being accepted from print journalists and photojournalists with at least five years professional experience.

One-year grants of \$35,000 are awarded to pursue vital independent projects.

DEADLINE: Oct. 1, 1999.

Fellows must be U.S. citizens.

WRITE, CALL OR E-MAIL:

The Alicia Patterson Foundation

1730 Pennsylvania Ave. NW Suite 850

Washington, DC 20006

(202) 393-5995

E-mail: apfengel@charm.net

www.aliciapatterson.org

SPEED THE SCIENCE

Medical Reporting Meets the Digital Journal



On May 21, Dr. George Lundberg's new electronic medical journal posted a "paper" about the use of information technology in health care. It wasn't all that memorable. What was worth noting was that it was submitted to the editor, peer-reviewed, revised, accepted, copy-edited, and posted electronically. And that, for reporters, it was posted without the customary time cushion of an embargo. Thanks to this site and others that will follow, medical writers may soon be working faster. The Internet is roiling this careful corner of journalism, and it's not clear yet whether readers should applaud.

Lundberg, 65, is the doctor who brought the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* credibility and edited it for seventeen years, before being fired for publishing an article about oral sex during the recent impeachment hearings. His Medscape General Medicine (MedGenMed) is a new journal within the larger Medscape site (www.medscape.com), which was launched in 1995. It claims more than a million users, including 200,000 physi-

cians. Lundberg became Medscape's editor in chief in February.

Before the end of the year a much larger and broader free biomedical site, E-biomed, may be online. It, too, is expected to post important articles as soon as they are accepted. Some would be peer-reviewed. Others, in another part of the site, would not. E-biomed's final shape has not been fully determined, but because the National Institutes of Health is funding it and Harold Varmus, the Nobel prize-winning cancer genetics researcher who directs NIH, is behind it, attention must be paid. (The proposal for the site is available at the NIH site at www.nih.gov.)

Lundberg says MedGenMed will be very much like *JAMA*, with articles on clinical research and medical trials, commentaries, and editorial positions on serious medical issues. E-biomed will be massive, covering "new results and ideas in the biomedical sciences," the proposal says, including medical research, cell and molecular biology, behavioral research, bioengineering, and other fields.

Both sites will have some of the qualities of the Big Four medical journals that now provide so much medical news, as filtered through medical reporters' coverage. These are *The New England Journal of Medicine* (U.S. circulation just over 350,000), *The Journal of the American Medical Association* (circulation roughly 332,000), *The Lancet* (U.S. circulation 11,000), and *The British Medical Journal* (North American circulation almost 3,200). The paper journals are not thrilled by this electronic competition.

These paper journals usually flag articles they consider hot or interesting to the public and, under the embargo system, give to journalists press releases, preview copies of the articles, and contact information. The reporters thus have time — usually several days — to digest a study, get comments from experts, and present a balanced piece. To no one's surprise, the flagged sto-

ries are the very ones that many reporters cover.

Medical writers will now lose that cushion of reporting time, at least when it comes to these two electronic journals. Reporters, editors, doctors, and your Aunt Mildred will get breaking medical news at the same time.

Varmus is somewhat sympathetic to reporters' concerns about this. The fast-paced digital system "might make reporters have to put the story together in a day instead of a week," he says.

Medical reporters seem mixed about the Internet's effect on their work. "I can't see any harm in everyone getting the news at the same time," says Nicholas Wade, a science reporter for *The New York Times*. Sally Squires, health and medical writer at *The Washington Post*, says the electronic speedup in medical reporting is already here. "In pediatrics, there's an electronic-only journal. I check EurekAlert (a free science news site of the American Association for the Advancement of Science) every day, along with the NIH and the National Library of Medicine. You're constantly aware of what's new."

"The bad news is that you don't get a week in advance," she says. "The good news is you really get some timely topics."

David Perlman, science editor of the



Sally Squires

San Francisco Chronicle, doesn't like the speedup. He concedes that "the public has as much right to know as we do," but that the public also needs the benefit of the experience of a good medical reporter. When a paper comes out, he says, a reporter asks, "Who's behind it? Is somebody

trying to peddle something? Who's the researcher? You develop some kind of instinct for balderdash. I insist on the luxury of checking things out."

Richard Harris, a science correspondent for National Public Radio, says that working without an embargo can mean "a scramble," but adds that "the major medical and science reporters I know are good reporters, and they will still do a careful job."

Lundberg, meanwhile, is hoping to post a paper every day. Reporters, editors, doctors, and your Aunt Mildred will have to read fast to keep up.

—Janice Hopkins Tanne

Tanne, a medical journalist in New York, contributes to *The British Medical Journal*.

in the public interest

From Marconi to Murrow to — Drudge?

by Lawrence K. Grossman

In one of those end-of-the-millennium features designed to fill space on a slow news day, Agence France Presse, the world's oldest wire service, picked ten top media events of this media-saturated century. Among the movers and shakers included in AFP's list were Guglielmo Marconi, the inventor of radio; John L. Baird, the inventor of television; Edward R. Murrow, whose *See It Now* launched nationwide television programming in the United States; Ted Turner, who created CNN, and — hold on to your hat — Matt Drudge, who aired Monicagate on his own self-published Internet scandal-sheet.

Why Drudge? Actually, AFP made a shrewd choice. The Walter Winchell wannabe is the harbinger of the shape of the press to come in the century ahead. With a modem, anyone with no training or credentials, like Drudge, who works on a laptop from his apartment in Los Angeles, can deliver the news of the world to a global audience.

Gutenberg made us all readers. Radio and television made us all firsthand observers. Xerox made us all publishers. The Internet makes us all journalists, broadcasters, columnists, commentators, and critics.

To update A.J. Leibling's classic crack about freedom of the press belonging to those who own one: in the next century freedom of the press could belong to everyone, at least everyone who owns a modem. The digital age, it appears, will be a paradoxical mix of oligopoly and anarchy. Media power is increasingly concentrating in the hands of a few monolithic

corporate gatekeepers like AT&T, Time Warner, NBC, Disney, Microsoft, and AOL. Yet in the cyberworld, an individual maverick gatecrasher like Matt Drudge can reach millions online around the globe.

Notwithstanding the utopian hype of cyber-enthusiasts like Esther Dyson, George Gilder, and Nicholas Negroponte, the Web still has a long way to go before it becomes a mainstream source of news and information, displacing conventional networks, stations, newspapers, and newsmagazines. But

the Internet is fast muscling its way into the once restricted precincts of the professional press.

We're flooded with firsthand information, insights, and eyewitness accounts of the Serbian conflict, not only from the professional corps of print and broadcast reporters but also from ordinary people — amateurs with computers, modems, cell phones, digital cameras, and access to e-mail — who dispatch their own descriptions of what's happening to a rapidly expanding audience online. The riveting and insightful e-mail dialogue between two high school students, one in Kosovo, the other in Berkeley, was recycled in newspapers and read throughout the country. Using Web sites and chat groups on the Internet, monks, farmers, housewives, paramilitary leaders, and propagandists in Serbia, Kosovo, Albania, Macedonia, and Montenegro tell, with various degrees of accuracy and trustworthiness, about what's happening in the beleaguered cities, towns, and refugee camps. *The New York Times* described the cyber-correspondents in Serbia as an alternative news source. *Newsweek*, with characteristic hyperbole, called the Web, "a vivid mirror of the struggle for Kosovo, a first in war."

Nor is it only online reports from new-age correspondents in remote news centers like Kosovo that attract attention. Amazon.com encourages ordinary readers to e-mail book reviews for sharing with millions who tap into its Web site. Amazon's Web site now offers the largest single collection of literary criticism and book reviews anywhere. Its reader-reviewers may not all be of the caliber of those in *The New York Review of Books* or *The Los Angeles Times Book Review*. But

TEN KEY DATES IN THE MEDIA IN THIS CENTURY

CHOSEN BY AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

December 12, 1901: Guglielmo Marconi sends the first radio waves across the Atlantic, paving the way for worldwide broadcasting.

November 2, 1920: First commercial broadcast program airs.

1926: John Logie Baird invents television.

1936: The BBC kicks off public television in Britain.

November 18, 1951: Edward R. Murrow's *See It Now* series launches nationwide television programming in the United States.

Late 1960s: A U.S. Defense Department project to link computers lays the foundation for the Internet.

1980: Ted Turner launches CNN, world's first all-news network.

August 1, 1981: The all-music channel MTV goes on the air.

1992: The browser Mosaic brings the Internet to non-technical computer users.

January 19, 1998: Matt Drudge airs Monicagate on the Internet. ■

Lawrence K. Grossman is a former president of NBC News and PBS.

their publication in cyberspace influences purchasers, creates a community of readers, and helps Amazon attract customers and sell books. Last time I looked, my own book, *The Electronic Republic*, had some half-dozen thoughtful reviews posted on Amazon, including one "five-star" customer critique from a woman in Bozeman, Montana. Amazon's listing for John Grisham's bestseller *The Testament* included more than 300 customer reviews. The virtual retailer plans to follow the same highly successful participatory pattern as it expands into

online sales of music and movies. By inviting comments and criticism from everyone, Amazon and others add legions of new reviewers to the once elite back-of-the-book journalism of professional movie and music critics.

The process of radically realigning the conventional world of the "fourth estate" has only just begun. Every TV station is required by law to go digital by 2003. Digital TV not only will bring crystal-clear pictures and hundreds of additional channels but also will make television sets interactive, like personal comput-

ers. In the digital era, amateur reporters as well as pros, "real people" as well as certified pundits, outsiders as well as insiders, ordinary observers as well as authentic experts, will be able to file their own videos and eyewitness reports to the world via Web sites and chat groups on the Internet. Notwithstanding their lack of professional training in journalism's canons of objectivity, accuracy, and fairness, some, like Matt Drudge, are bound to become the next century's media stars.

Yes, professional standards will fall when the floodgates open to reporters-without-training, broadcasters-without-credentials, and pundits-without-editors. (For many, the tabloid press, both



Announces THE KAISER MEDIA FELLOWS IN HEALTH FOR 1999

Six journalists have been selected as 1999 Kaiser Media fellows:

Fred de Sam Lazaro, correspondent, *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*; executive producer, *KTCA-Twin Cities Public Television*, St. Paul, MN

Project: The role of international medical graduates in providing health care in under-served urban centers and rural areas in the U.S.

Linda Wright Moore, editorial writer, *The Philadelphia Daily News*

Project: Disparities in health status and access to medical care between black and white Americans

Charles Ornstein, health business reporter, *The Dallas Morning News*

Project: The evolving role of employers in the health care system—what role should they play in providing benefits for employees, retirees and their families?

Joe Palca, correspondent, science desk, National Public Radio

Project: How clinical trials work—the ethical, medical, financial and societal issues involved

Neil Rosenberg, senior medical reporter, *The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*

Project: Differences in health care treatment due to race, gender and age

Brenda Wilson, correspondent and editor for public health, health policy and medicine, National Public Radio

Project: AIDS and HIV prevention efforts in South Africa—attitudes toward sexuality, Western medicine, death and disease—and the implications for the U.S.

In 2000, the Kaiser Media Fellowships Program will again award up to six fellowships to print, television and radio journalists and editors interested in health policy, healthcare financing and public health issues. Information about the 2000 program will be available shortly, with applications due in March 2000. The aim is to provide journalists with a highly flexible range of opportunities to pursue individual projects, combined with group briefings and site visits on a wide range of health and social policy issues.

For more information, or to apply for the 2000 awards, visit our website at www.kff.org; or write/e-mail:

Penny Duckham
Executive Director of the Kaiser Media Fellowships Program
Kaiser Family Foundation
2400 Sand Hill Road
Menlo Park, CA 94025
e-mail: pduckham@kff.org

The Kaiser Family Foundation is an independent health care foundation and is not affiliated with Kaiser Permanente or Kaiser Industries.

IT'LL BE UP TO THE CONSUMER TO SORT OUT THE COHERENT AND THE CREDIBLE FROM THE FRAUDULENT AND THE DEMENTED

print and electronic, has already descended to that low point.) But the digital age also has the potential to provide an unprecedented richness of new sources of information, diversity of views, and variety of perspectives. It'll be up to the consumer to sort out the coherent and credible from the fraudulent and demented — an environment in which an earned reputation for journalistic professionalism will obviously get a leg up.

For all the buffoons and charlatans who will undoubtedly join the new-age virtual press corps, audiences at home will also have the opportunity to hear directly from university scholars; authorities from the Library of Congress and elsewhere; experts and advocates from think tanks with points of view worth considering; and newcomers with unconventional ideas.

With everyone a potential journalist, broadcaster, columnist, commentator, and critic in the twenty-first century, it'll be a media jungle out there, both for better and worse. Matt Drudge's enshrinement in the pantheon of this century's media giants demonstrates that fact all too well. ♦

How Far Would You Go For a Story?

If it's a good one, you can go as far as you like

Be a foreign correspondent for the . . .



Tricia Uhlir (Pew Fellow, fall 1998) climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro as part of her reporting on ecotourism



Todd Bensman of the Dallas Morning News (Pew Fellow, fall 1998) interviewed Himba tribespeople in Namibia threatened by a proposed dam

PEW FELLOWSHIPS in INTERNATIONAL JOURNALISM



Deadlines: *October 1, 1999 for the spring 2000 program*

April 1, 2000 for the fall 2000 program

Do you want to get off the beaten track? Does covering an international story in a country in Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America, or the Middle East appeal to you? Are you interested in reporting on global issues such as refugee assistance, population displacement, environment, health, media, labor, trade, economic development, cultural and religious change, ethnic conflict?

Each year, up to 15 early-career U.S. journalists are awarded fellowships to study international issues in Washington, D.C. for two months and then travel anywhere in the world for up to five weeks to report on a significant news story.

Journalists in all media are encouraged to apply for the program, which is conducted twice a year – once in the fall and once in the spring. Pew Fellows receive stipends of \$2,000 a month in Washington, as well as a travel allowance of \$3,000. Roundtrip airfare to an international destination is also provided.

For more information, see our website at www.pewfellowships.org or call (202) 663-7761 or fax (202) 663-7762 or write to Pew Fellowships in International Journalism, Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, 1619 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036

A. LIAR B. CRUSADER C. MUCKRAKER D. SCOUNDREL E. HERO

Match each one with the appropriate journalist.



Hearst



Cooke



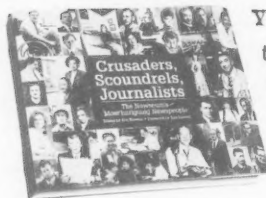
Duranty



Wells



Murrow



You can't, can you? Journalism attracts all kinds — the good, the bad and the in-between. And sometimes newspeople are a little of each. Walter Duranty, for example, was not one of the shining stars of the fourth estate. In 1932 he got a Pulitzer Prize for predicting Stalin's rise to power. A year later, in a special report in which he purposely lied, he denied the existence of a government-engineered famine that the dictator used to kill 9 million people. He wrote the story in order to preserve his reputation as a reporter and his access to Soviet officials.

Journalism is full of haranguers, pot stirrers, liars and genuine heroes. "Crusaders, Scoundrels, Journalists" profiles nearly 300 of the best known newspeople. It's available right now.

NEWSEUM

The Story Behind The News

On sale in September at the Newseum, in bookstores, online and by calling 703/284-2880 for phone orders.

1101 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA (2 blocks from Rosslyn Metro) • Free Admission • Open Wednesday - Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. • Call 888/NEWSEUM or 703/284-3544 • www.newseum.org

darts & laurels

◆ **DART** to the *Poughkeepsie Journal* and reporter Elizabeth Lynch, for moonstruck journalism. Spread out across the top of the *Journal's* April 7 front page was an article on Mr. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon and their Unification Church that seemed the answer to a p.r. prayer. CHURCH COFOUNDER GIVES MESSAGE OF UNITY, the headline proclaimed, followed by a text that bathed the self-anointed messiahs in a nice warm glow. An accompanying story spread the gospel that FOLLOWERS SEE MORE ACCEPTANCE OF CHURCH PRINCIPLES, while another offered reverent testimony to the Moons' accomplishments and goals. Also included was an information box about the church's Web site. Lynch's reporting might have benefited from a look at the work of fellow Gannetteer Bill Varner, whose documented stories on the Moons in the nearby Westchester Suburban Newspapers are considerably more down to earth.

◆ **DART** to the Austin, Texas, *American-Statesman*, for high-risk journalism. Appearing every Wednesday in the paper's financial pages is a column by one Mary Scott Nabers, who is regularly identified, with seeming due diligence, as "president and chief executive of Strategic Partnerships Inc., an Austin-based company specializing in public sector procurement." But such general disclosure can fall decidedly short when it comes to specifics. In her February 10 offering, for example (and again on March 3, April 7, and May 19), Nabers touted an electronic credit card for food stamps known as the Lone Star Card, without revealing that the "private sector partner" that got the Lone Star Card contract plum was a subsidiary of GTECH Corporation, a top Nabers client. The April 7 column gave a similar plug to Northrop Grumman, another Nabers client.

◆ **DART** to the *Daily Hampshire Gazette*, Northampton, Massachusetts, for cheesy journalism. Above the page-one logo on its March 15 edition the *Gazette* carried three teasers to (presumably) noteworthy inside news: one to a local sports event ("page B1"); one to a national sports event ("page C8"), and one to "Monday Special from Pizza Factory (page A7)." Readers who turned to A7 found a 4-by-5-inch coupon ad: "Buy One Pizza, Get One Pizza Free." (Was the *Gazette's* crust hardened by the example of *Editor & Publisher*? Back in September, when the industry trade magazine presented its new design, it appeared to have finally dropped its eighty-

year-practice of selling its cover to advertisers. Instead, the editors explained in their story on the change, that valuable space would now be filled with news headlines, analysis, and trend-spotting. But alas, in that very same issue, and in those that have followed, the cover still delivers the dough. In the eye-catching upper-right-hand corner next to the *E&P* logo stands a legitimate-looking headline that is, in fact, an adline, complete with instructions to, for instance, "see Gannett ad inside.")

◆ **LAUREL** to the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, for redefining the concept of a full-court press. On March 10, one day before the University of Minnesota men's basketball team was to compete in the first-round game of the NCAA tournament in Seattle, the paper published a front-page report on allegations that over a five-year period at least twenty players had had research papers, take-home exams, and other academic work done for them by others, in violation of the student-athlete honor code and NCAA rules. Evidence uncovered by the *Press* in its three-month investigation included a paper on Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X, secretly written by the office manager of the academic counseling unit and handed in to various professors by three different players; the manager also ghost-wrote papers for players (while they watched TV) on subjects that interested her personally, such as women's gains in the workplace and the menstrual cycle. The unique relationship between the academic counseling unit and the men's athletic department was made graphically clear by an organizational chart. Net results of the *Press's* exposé: the promise of an outside investigation by the university's president, a call for a probe by the board of regents, and the possibility of a legislative hearing. Extra points: four Gophers suspended from the Seattle game, 1,000 angry letters and e-mails from loyal fans, several threats of an advertising boycott, public condemnation (of the *paper!*) by the governor, and 400 cancelled subscriptions.

◆ **DART** to WBBM-TV, Chicago, for contributing to the news media's credibility gap. A series of commercials for Northwestern Memorial Hospital, produced by the station in the style of the newscasts in which the commercials aired, featured Susan Anderson, a former anchor and consumer reporter for WBBM. The hospital series seemed to follow in the less-than-golden tradition established by the

CBS-owned station last December, when it presented in the style of a legitimate report a commercial for Hawaiian tourism. The "reporter" in that "report," which ran during the station's morning newscast, was Lonnie Lardner — a former reporter for Chicago TV station WLS — who wrapped up the commercial thusly: "I'm Lonnie Lardner for CBS 2 Chicago." Defending their actions, station bosses explained that a *real* reporter would have said "*News 2 Chicago*." *Editor's note:* Because WBBM refused to provide CJR with transcripts or tapes, the judgment rendered here represents a rare departure from Darts & Laurels policy of personally reviewing all material mentioned in the column. Instead, this Dart relied on reports by the respected media critic Robert Feder, who took the station to task in his *Chicago Sun-Times* columns of December 16 and April 29. As Feder summed things up, "The pertinent question no longer is whether such commercials cross the line. The question is whether there is a line anymore."

◆ **LAUREL** to the *Toledo Blade* and senior writer Sam Roe, for an incisive exposé. Roe's six-part series, "Deadly Alliance," cut through fifty years of polluted facts to show how the U.S. defense establishment, together with American producers of beryllium, a metal used in the making of nuclear weapons, knowingly allowed — indeed, still allows — thousands of workers to be exposed to lethal levels of the metal's toxic dust. Based on a twenty-two-month investigation and drawing on tens of thousands of court, industry, and newly declassified government records, as well as on interviews with dozens of government officials, industry leaders, and victims, the series (March 28-April 2) included photos and charts, maps and memos that graphically illustrated the location of the major plants; the properties of beryllium that make it so attractive to scientists; how the poisonous dust can attack even an office worker's lungs — even the lungs of a buyer of that worker's used car; and what noted lawmakers and defense and energy officials did to help the industry leader, Ohio's Brush Wellman Inc, kill an OSHA safety plan that might have slowed production. Since the *Blade's* piercing series began, calls — for congressional hearings, for workers' compensation, for safety reform — have continued to fill the air.

◆ **LAUREL EXPANDED** to include Christopher Byron, contributor to *MSNBC.com*, for first-class marksmanship. In our May/June issue, CJR bestowed a Laurel on *The Street.com* and writer Lewis Perdue for a powerful January report blasting the online auction house eBay's dangerously irresponsible and possibly illegal practice of selling guns to any and all comers, licensed

or not. The report was followed by eBay's February announcement that it would no longer carry the deadly stuff. CJR has since learned that several months earlier, in a pointed analysis of eBay's sensational profitability that appeared on *MSNBC.com*, Byron had taken similar aim. "A close look at what in fact is actually for sale on the eBay Web site," Byron showed in his November 13 piece, "reveals an utterly stupefying array" of questionable merchandise — including AK-47 semiautomatic rifles and flesh-shredding ammunition. And that, he quotes one dealer as saying, "barely scratches the surface."

◆ **DART** to *The Montgomery Journal*, in Rockville, Maryland, and president Karl Spain, for myopic journalism. Appearing on page one on April 18 was Spain's above-the-fold, first-person account of a laser procedure he underwent that allows him to see without glasses. At the end of Spain's 2,000-word (plus 28-column-inches-of-photos provided by the laser center) story — which uses the word "miracle" four separate times — is a note disclosing that Spain "received a reduced rate for the LASIK procedure described in this article and performed by Dr. Mark Whitten. Whitten recently performed his 10,000th LASIK procedure and also performs reduced-rate procedures for police officers and firefighters." Fittingly, a paid advertisement for Whitten Laser Eye Associates appeared below the free one.

◆ **DART** to *Miami Herald* sportswriter Clark Spencer, for off-track journalism. Spencer's April 25 column on the upcoming Kentucky Derby got off to an easy start, with inside dope about the difficulties of producing lively coverage of an event that was favored to be dull. But when he stretched the dullness factor to include the city of "Louisville itself," he stumbled out of control. To show how "drab" a place it was, and why he approached a visit there with such understandable "dread," he described "a restaurant review I came across two years ago during Derby week" in which "the reviewer gushed about a new Red Lobster, raving on about the popcorn shrimp . . . and noting the ambience . . . created by the wall hangings of oars and fishnets." Spencer finished triumphantly, "I kid you not." Perhaps he was wearing blinders when he read that review. For, as pointed out by media critic Ed Woodward in the May 5 issue of the alternative weekly *Leo*, not only was it clearly labeled "Youth Review," but it also identified the writer as being "in the eighth grade at Highland Middle School."

This column is written by Gloria Cooper, CJR's managing editor, to whom nominations should be addressed.

WE LOVE TECHNOLOGY. It's new and it's shiny and it inspires a certain awe, like the Great Pyramid of Cheops or a tiny new human being. Technology is good at the heavy lifting. People are good at the heavy thinking. Bits and bytes and ones and zeroes fly around the planet, but only at our discretion. The computer has a role model, and it is us. Computers are plastic and metal and sand. People are brilliance and discernment and vision. Admire machines. Worship their inventors.

HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT



Merrill Lynch

PAY FOR JOURNALAL

What's Lifting It? Will It Keep Rising? Why Are We Still Playing Catch-Up?

BY ANNE COLAMOSCA

An economic expansion that has lasted an unprecedented eight years. A sharp drop in the unemployment rate that, at least for now, has all but put an end to two decades of falling real incomes. A quadrupling of stock prices since the beginning of the decade. A new technology that speeds the flow of information and boosts productivity. For journalists, this all adds up to the strongest job market in a long, long time. Meaning, for many of us, more jobs to choose from, and increasing pay.

Media heavyweights like The Associated Press, Time Inc., and Gannett are hiring and, in some cases, at salaries that have increased substantially from the mid-1990s. Technology reporters, business reporters, and copy editors are in particularly high demand. The explosion of journalistic Web sites and magazines has created hundreds and hundreds of jobs over the last four years, a few paying more than \$50,000 a year for beginners.

Indeed, new media is a driving force. By expanding the number of jobs, new media is beginning to change the supply and demand equation in both new and traditional media. And, the money that is lubricating the journalistic market is both the real kind, produced by profits in the business, and the "funny kind" that results from the great boom that has been lifting prices of Internet stocks. Meanwhile, advertising is on the rise. As the economy steams along, shortages are appearing in traditional job slots, partly because of the ruthless cost cutting of the early 1990s.

There is no neat, unambiguous source of informa-

Anne Colamosca, a former staff writer for Business Week, is the co-author, with William Wolman, of The Judas Economy: The Triumph of Capital and the Betrayal of Work. She has written for a number of national publications.

tion about journalists' salaries or how they compare with pay in other professions. But the data that we do have say that over the past decade — and especially over the past three or four years — the increase in earnings of journalists has outstripped the increase in most other occupations, including the professions.

COMPARED TO WHAT?

By no means are journalists getting rich. Many media companies continue to pay poorly, sometimes despite high profit margins. The absolute dollar gap between the incomes of journalists and people in other elite professions, meanwhile, has actually been *growing*. The reason is simple: journalistic salary increases are coming off a lower base.

Top journalism schools — Northwestern, Missouri, Columbia — turn out graduates with salary ranges anywhere from \$18,000 (usually at a small newspaper or TV station) to \$60,000 (still very unusual). Newly minted MBAs from the most competitive programs are pulling down anywhere from \$70,000 to \$175,000.

Lawyers' salaries range from \$35,000 for public law jobs to more than \$100,000 for neophyte big-firm lawyers from top schools.

Also: in the years between the 1973 OPEC oil embargo and the mid-1990s, the inflation-adjusted income of the overwhelming majority of Americans — journalists included — declined. When expressed in dollars of constant purchasing power, weekly earnings of the average American worker dropped by nearly 20 percent between 1973 and 1994, according to the 1999 Economic Report of the President. It is against this backdrop that the essentially positive current trends in the relative salaries of journalists must be understood.

One place that the bracing news about salaries shows up is in the annual Bureau of Labor Statistics survey, which mea-

THE FIGURES IN THE SALARY BOXES ON THE PAGES THAT FOLLOW WERE COMPILED FROM INTERVIEWS WITH REPORTERS, EDITORS, AND OTHER INDUSTRY EMPLOYEES AND EXPERTS.



ISTS IS GOING UP

sures the median worker's pay in many occupations. For journalism, that median is keyed to "editors and reporters," and covers people who define themselves as being one or the other. (Presumably, it would exclude the seven-digit Tom Brokaws and Diane Sawyer of the business, and such out-sized paychecks wouldn't much matter anyway in the figuring of a median.)

The BLS data show that over the past ten years, the rise in salaries for editors and reporters has been 46 percent. That exceeds almost every other profession, including architects (41 percent), financial managers (35 percent), accountants and auditors (34 percent), and lawyers (32 percent). Journalists' wage increases have even beaten out those of computer specialists (40 percent).

From 1994, when stagnation in U.S. real wages came to an end, through 1998, journalists' salaries rose 17 percent, versus 11 percent for the total workforce. In this period, journalists beat out accountants and auditors (8 percent), computer specialists (12 percent), and lawyers (8 percent), but not architects (24 percent) and financial managers (18 percent). Median weekly wages for editors and reporters climbed from \$614 in 1994 to \$723 in 1998.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

The BLS data are confirmed by other systematic studies, such as the Annual Survey of Journalism & Mass Communication by the University of Georgia Journalism School. It shows that 1997 graduates with a bachelor's degree in journalism and who went into journalism had a higher rate of full-time employment than at any time since 1986. And that both full-time and part-time journalism jobholders were more likely than in recent years to report that their positions are permanent, not temporary. The survey found that the best-paying jobs went to graduates hired by magazines, newsletters, trade publications, and on-line publishers. It also found that the median starting salary of journalists with a bachelor's degree in journalism in 1997 was \$23,000. Not surprisingly, the median new media

salary exceeded that by \$4,320, or \$27,320 for new graduates. For journalists with a master's degree, the median starting salary jumped considerably, to \$28,500.

One striking trend in the survey: salaries for people going into journalism increased faster than those in advertising and public relations, where pay had long been higher than in journalism. In both those fields, starting salaries remained basically unchanged from a year earlier — just above \$23,000 for public relations and just under \$22,000 for advertising. According to the Georgia survey, journalists also reported receiving better benefit packages than they had at any time since 1992.

George Kennedy, a University of Missouri journalism professor, says, "There have been no people in recent classes who wanted a newspaper job who couldn't find it." Demand is exceptionally strong for copy editors, he says, and this traditional job category enjoyed larger than usual wage gains in the spring of 1999, a show of strength at the foundations that surely reflects the thriving economy.

GRAINS OF SALT

Newspaper Guild data show a broadly similar picture. Between 1991 and 1999, the average guild top minimum salary (usually reached after five or six years) increased by 18.38 percent — from \$668.18 per week to \$791.05. The rate of increase in those years averaged 2.41 percent. But, only 111 newspapers belong to the guild. Figures on guild salaries are skewed toward the biggest and strongest newspapers,

which tend to be organized into the union.

Some people familiar with the history of The Newspaper Guild stress that recent increases must be taken with a grain of salt. They argue that the gains since 1995 merely represent a partial and inadequate catch-up from the damage done to journalists' wages in the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s. Howard Stanger, a professor of labor relations at Buffalo State University, has studied guild contracts back to 1977. He points out that between 1977 and 1995, the median top minimum salary for guild reporters — when adjusted for inflation — declined by 14 percent. That means that the 2.7 percent average yearly gain in top minimums (unadjusted for inflation in

NEWSPAPERS			
Title	City	Experience (years)	Salary
EDITOR			
	Defiance, Ohio	5-10	\$40,000
	Utica, N.Y.	10	\$36,000
	Gainesville, Tex.	10	\$25,000
	Racine, Wis.	28	\$69,000
	Greenville, Tex.	30	\$35,000
MANAGING EDITOR			
	Albion, Mich.	3	\$25,000
	Carlsbad, N.M.	10	\$36-41,000
	Greenville, Tex.	15	\$30,000
	Santa Fe, N.M.	22	\$75,000
	Cedar Rapids, Iowa	24	\$87,000
	San Marcos, Tex.	25	\$30,000
	Chattanooga, Tenn.	25	\$100,000
SECTION EDITOR			
	Defiance, Ohio	5	\$25,000
	Peoria, Ill.	14	\$40,000
	San Marcos, Tex.	15	\$24,000
REPORTER			
	Cedar Rapids, Iowa	3-4	\$29,000
	Chattanooga, Tenn.	5	\$32,000
	Carlsbad, Calif.	5	\$23,000
	Peoria, Ill.	5	\$37,000
	Long Island, N.Y.	17	\$72,500
	Santa Fe, N.M.	20	\$45,000
ENTRY-LEVEL REPORTER			
	Carlsbad, N.M.	0-1	\$17,000
	San Marcos, Tex.	0-1	\$18,000
	Santa Fe, N.M.	0-1	\$26,000
	Peoria, Ill.	1	\$22,000
	Cedar Rapids, Iowa	1	\$23,500

PAY/COVER STORY

the years since 1995) still leaves the average guild reporter with a lot of catching up to do.

At *Newsday*, one of the best paying dailies, the top minimum for reporters and editors in the bargaining unit rose 28 percent between April 1989 and April 1999 — from \$1,102 a week to \$1,415. But the cost of living in the metropolitan New York area, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, rose 36 percent, leaving *Newsday* employees 8 percentage points behind for the decade. *Newsday's* employees are represented by the Graphic Communications International Union.

The late 1970s and the 1980s were unquestionably tough years. Real wages were under pressure despite the high-flying stock market of the 1980s, and the newsroom was affected by the same trends that kept wages down and union organizers at bay all over the economy. Even at strong, profitable organizations, cuts were made to preserve — or enlarge — profits. There were downsizings based on so-called performance-based dismissals. More and more journalists were critiqued by corporate human resource departments, which were charged with quantifying editorial productivity, using modern versions of time and motion studies. The recent strong demand for journalists has somewhat blunted it, but this cost-saving mentality has by no means vanished. Should the economy falter, the axes will be out again.

A major exception to the general good news: small newspapers and television and radio stations are not fully participating in the upward wage trend. "Many jobs there still start at salaries under \$20,000 a year," says Abe Peck, associate dean of Northwestern's J-school. "This makes employers there much less competitive in the current overall job market than they have been in the past." (See

BROADCAST			
NEWS			
	City	Journalism Experience	Salary
Producer	Dallas	2-3	\$35,000
	Los Angeles		\$40,000
	New York		\$50,000
	Dallas	4-7	\$63,000
	Los Angeles		\$70,000
	New York		\$75,000
er	Dallas	7-10	\$100,000
	Los Angeles		\$110,000
	New York		\$120-140,000
ducer	Dallas	10-12	\$200-400,000
	Los Angeles		\$225-450,000
	New York		\$250-500,000
t	Dallas	5-7	\$75,000
	Los Angeles		\$90,000
	New York		\$100,000
	Washington		\$100-120,000
S			
r	Fargo, N.Dak.	3-5	\$35,000
	Battle Creek, Mich.	10	\$75,000
	New York, N.Y.	10+	\$150,000
	Tulsa, Okla.	23	\$100,000
	Bismarck, N.Dak.	30	\$51,000
	Fargo, N.Dak.	5	\$40,000
	Battle Creek, Mich.	4-5	\$40,000
	St. Louis, Mo.	6-8	\$75-125,000
	Tulsa, Okla.	8	\$80-120,000
	Bismarck, N.Dak.	10-18	\$30-41,000
	Bismarck, N.Dak.	1	\$19,800
	Battle Creek, Mich.	2	\$23,000
	Fargo, N.Dak.	2	\$24,000
	Portland, Oreg.	3-5	\$50-75,000
t	Fargo, N.Dak.	0-1	\$16,000
	Battle Creek, Mich.	1-2	\$30,000
	Bismarck, N.Dak.	2	\$21,000
	Tulsa, Okla.	4-8	\$26-40,000
	Los Angeles, Calif.	5-7	\$80-120,000

"Who's Left Out," page 29.)

Small-market TV has lagged terribly. "Working in television news has become too popular for the good of entry-level pay," says University of Missouri professor emeritus Vernon Stone, who has been conducting surveys of television salaries for many years. Stone notes that the gap between entry-level TV journalism jobs and newspaper journalism jobs was still the same inflation-adjusted 12 percent in 1996 as it was in 1989 — with the newspapers on top.

Yet overall, television news salaries were up 4.1 percent in 1998 over 1997, for an inflation-adjusted gain of 2.5 percent, according to a survey by the Radio-Television News Directors Association

and Ball State University. The median news reporter in the top twenty-five markets earned \$61,000 last year, dropping to \$35,000 in the second-tier of twenty-five markets. The medians ranged from \$17,000 to \$25,500 in the remaining markets. News director medians in the same three categories were \$115,000, \$82,000, and from \$41,000 to \$68,000.

THE FORCES AT WORK

New forces propelling the economy are carrying the newsroom in their wake. Journalism is benefiting from a kinetic mixture of money and technology.

The recent Internet stock boom has made it easy to raise money for new online ventures, including journalistic ventures. Though newspaper stocks, perhaps partly because of the fear that the Internet will cut into classified advertising, have lagged behind the S&P 500 somewhat over the past three years, a number of media stocks have surged. Adjusted for stock splits, from the end of June 1996 to the end of May 1999 the stock of Time Warner has increased 247 percent; McGraw-Hill by 127 percent; Gannett by 104 percent.

The growing perception that news is now an ingredient of the Internet has changed the calculation that goes into investment decisions. Established companies are willing to invest in online ventures in order to compete. Media companies are born and go up on the Web. Internet portals suddenly bet that an investment in news will eventually pay off; Netscape, recently bought by America Online, now perceives news as part of its basic service, as do other major Internet portals like Yahoo, Lycos, and Excite. Even outfits like broker Charles Schwab are starting financial news

and information services and hiring journalists to run them.

Internet dreams are keeping investments in new online products high, even though the vast majority of journalistic ventures on the net are still money losers — largely *big* money losers, as are most other enterprises in the dot com world. It remains very much to be seen who will survive the shakeout that will inevitably follow the boom. But no matter how the great race ends, the effects on the entire journalistic workplace will be profound.

RIDING THE WAVE

The managing editor of a major magazine's Web site is a little in awe of what he is paying these days. "We have a twenty-five-year-old working for us who did several summer internships and learned all about computer programming and graphics design — literally the whole production side of what it takes to run an online publication. He also understands editing copy. Today, three years out of college, he is making \$72,000."

A business magazine offered an \$80,000 job to a thirtyish reporter working for TheStreet.com, the online service focusing on markets and investments. But the publication was turned down — at least partly because, the editor says, the reporter was expecting to benefit from stock options that he would be awarded in the company's initial public offering in early May. Stories like this are still fairly rare, but they fire up the imaginations of those contemplating jobs in new media.

Steven Ross, a Columbia journalism professor, cautions that many online jobs at newspapers remain low paid and dreary. (About half of Columbia's 240 graduating journalists planned to pursue newspaper jobs, the traditional entry into the profession, with most of the rest split between broadcast and magazines.)

Meanwhile, the epicenter of the information revolution — high tech itself — has created one of the biggest beats and hottest job markets in journalism. Sili-

con Valley — growth engine of the '90s economy — has created a cadre of increasingly high-paid reporters. Peter B. Hillan, executive business editor at the *San Jose Mercury News*, usually has twenty to twenty-five reporters covering the industry, and he has some trouble keeping them. "One of the hardest parts of my job," he says, "is continuing to find reporters with strong technology backgrounds. I often hire from industry trade newspapers and then work on their writing skills."

Hillan says his staff is constantly raided by the likes of *Fortune*, *Business Week*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. Most recent-

time," says Henry Muller, editorial director of Time Inc. "People who tend towards the high end of our salary scale, but not the very top, are being offered jobs — assistant art directors, writers, assistant managing editors — people from all of our magazines. For each offer, I have to come up with some response. I am spending much more time dealing with issues of how to compensate people than I have in the six years I've had this job."

A RISING TIDE

The robust economy, meanwhile, has led to a flood of advertising dollars, making media companies better able to afford higher paychecks. According to Competitive Media Reporting, total ad spending jumped by 8 percent last year and has risen 32 percent since 1995. That is far faster than the growth rate of the economy as a whole (gross domestic product increased 4.9 percent last year and 17.1 percent since 1995).

The big winners: cable television networks, where ad revenues rose 95 percent since 1995, to \$6.7 billion; and newspapers, which enjoyed a 27 percent rise, to \$17 billion.

Internet advertising rose 89 percent in 1998, but the 1998 total was only \$1.03 billion. Total advertising spending on other media was \$77.6 billion. Yet in its impact on the job market, new media surely is a tail that wags the dog.

PAYCHECK CONVERGENCE?

Some melding of new media and traditional media is inevitable, and this will reverberate on the job and in the paycheck. An increasing number of journalists are already moving more easily among new journalism's fresh and various branches — online operations run by traditional media companies, editorial operations run by large high-tech companies, independent editorial Web sites. "Our graduates are being hired

MAGAZINES			
Title	Publication	Experience	Salary
EXECUTIVE EDITOR			
	Child Magazine (N.Y.)	8-10	\$80-90,000
	Greenwich Magazine (Conn.)	12	\$50,000
	*Sports Illustrated (N.Y.)	35	\$400,000
MANAGING EDITOR			
	Power and Motor Yacht (N.Y.)	5	\$50,000
	Boy's Life (Tex.)	10	\$55-75,000
	Emergence (D.C.)	23	\$85,000
ASSOCIATE EDITOR			
	Ohio Magazine	2-4	\$28,000
	Marie Claire (N.Y.)	3-4	\$36,000
	Bridal Guide (N.Y.)	4	\$40,000
REPORTER			
	Milwaukee Magazine (Wis.)	5	\$25-30,000
	Medical Economics (N.J.)	5-10	\$50-70,000
	Time (N.Y.)	7	\$75,000
RESEARCHER			
	Time (N.Y.)	0-1	\$30,000
	Ohio Magazine	0-1	\$21,500
	Medical Economics (N.J.)	10	\$40,000

* At Sports Illustrated, executive editor is the number two position.

ly Women.com, an online news operation, hired away a *Mercury News* reporter by putting together a compensation package "including stock options," adds Hillan. He recently lost another employee, Adam Lashinsky, a high-tech stock columnist at the *Mercury News* who was offered a column with TheStreet.com. Lashinsky got pre-IPO stock options just days before TheStreet.com went public in early May. "Obviously, there was no way I could come up with a counter offer," laughs Hillan. "Adam had high name recognition and they really wanted him. It was a terrific deal for him."

Raiding, of course, is not confined to business reporting. "Our problem is that we are being raided more often now by companies like Condé Nast and Hearst than we have been in a long

PAY/COVER STORY

into a multi-tasked environment right now," says Northwestern's Peck.

Peck sees "the speed culture of the Internet" at work. "Not only do new journalists do several kinds of jobs at a time," he says, "they also change jobs at a much faster rate than they used to." He cites a grad who has taken progressively better jobs and pay by working at five different outlets — just since 1993.

There are a few signs that some new media and old media wages are beginning to converge. The Associated Press, which has always helped set standards in the journalism business, has had the same wage rates for online and traditional reporting staffs since 1996, when its online operation began. The AP pays \$539 a week to start, rising to \$904 after six years. At Northwestern, Peck reports that median salaries of 1997 master's degree graduates after one year in the work force were \$33,280 for online journalists and \$32,000 for magazine journalists, clearly a close match. But newspaper reporters averaged only \$26,000.

WHAT IF THE BUBBLE BURSTS?

The job market is buoyant now. But what about when the next recession arrives? "The fate of new media may depend on how long the economy remains as good as it is today," says Gene Roberts, the former *New York Times* managing editor who is now teaching at the University of Maryland.

"You can have all the hits in the world on your site, but if they don't show up in real profits, the site won't last," he adds. "Newspapers are hedging their bets by continuing to run online news coverage so that if classified advertising does move to the Net, as people fear it could, it might move to their own net divisions. No one is really sure what is going to happen."

The big "brand names" in journalism have sunk hundreds of millions into

NEW MEDIA			
Title	Company	Journalism Experience	Salary
Online Editor	Seattle Times	0	\$34-45,000
Producer	New York Times	1	\$34,000
Staff Reporter	TheStreet.com	2-3	\$44,000
Producer	Denver Post	2-3	\$35-40,000
Reporter	Wall Street Journal	4	\$55,000
Senior Editor	CBS Marketwatch.com	5+	\$65-95,000
Senior Producer	Go Network	7	\$77,500
Managing Editor	FACSNET (nonprofit)	8	\$40,000

online divisions, but most have not even begun to break even. If the stock market dives or if the economy slows drastically over the next year, and if corporations then decide they can no longer support money-losers, a lot of people could lose their jobs. On the other hand, says a high-level editor of a major online news operation: if the Net has another two to three years to develop and grow as a news medium, "I think it could make back a lot of what has been sunk into it. If that happens, salaries could continue to go up."

The online universe has never been through a major media advertising slump, and if that happens it could be very hard, says the editor. "It is a pressure-laden field, which changes dramatically in a short window of time."

CAN THE UNIONS GO DIGITAL?

Given the changing conditions of the new journalistic workplace, the future of newsroom unions is very much up in the air. Long hours, more stress, evolving technology, and perhaps most important, the convergence of multime-

dia companies, create major challenges — and perhaps major opportunities — for newsroom unionism.

About 40 percent of big city newspapers and less than 20 percent of small papers are organized by The Newspaper Guild. As in other service industries — education, for example — there is serious pressure to convert salary scales from seniority

to merit pay.

"Newspaper management would like to totally control the amount of all raises every time a new contract is signed," says labor economist Stanger, "and make all raises dependent on merit, which management would decide unilaterally." The guild, he notes, is not totally opposed to merit pay, but it wants some voice in how that would be determined.

TALKING MONEY

It seems that journalists talk more about money these days than in the past. But veterans say they see no decline in the passion for reporting, writing, and truth that has always characterized the business. They also see no lack of talented twenty-somethings trying to get journalism jobs despite the growing disparity between starting salaries for journalists and their counterparts — investment bankers, lawyers, management consultants, and high-end computer people.

CNN commentator Myron Kandel, who cut his teeth on the old *New York Herald Tribune*, where he was financial editor, and who was a pioneer at CNN, is

among those who discern no real change in the ethos. And he approves: "They keep coming and I don't notice any difference between the current crop and those who came before them over the last thirty-five years. Of course, now you have much larger numbers of talented women coming into the journalistic workplace than you did years ago. But I don't see this generation of journalists as different in any other important way. We still do it for the love of the business." ■

BIG WIGS			
Name	Title	Company	Compensation
Donald E. Graham	c.e.o.	Washington Post Co.	\$ 579,316
Burl Osborne	publisher	Dallas Morning News	\$ 743,826
Arthur Sulzberger Jr.	chairman	New York Times Co.	\$1,111,154
John Madigan	c.e.o.	Tribune Co.	\$1,773,216
P. Anthony Ridder	c.e.o.	Knight-Ridder	\$1,839,690
John Curley	c.e.o.	Gannett	\$2,499,274
Mark Wiles	c.e.o.	Times Mirror	\$3,479,659
Michael Eisner	c.e.o.	Disney	\$5,768,243
Mel Karmazin	c.e.o.	CBS	\$6,004,294
Joseph L. Dionne	chairman	McGraw-Hill	\$6,553,909
Dan Rather	anchor	CBS	\$7,000,000
Gerald Levin	c.e.o.	Time Warner Inc.	\$9,584,746
Tom Ryder	chairman	Reader's Digest Co.	\$9,700,423

Source: *Media Industry Newsletter*. These figures include base salary, bonus, long-term payments and restricted stock awards. Value of stock options is not included.

WHO'S LEFT OUT?

Small Markets, Small Paychecks

Despite prevailing myth, a rising tide does not lift all boats. Many small newspapers and TV stations continue to pay salaries that are painfully low.

At some small newspapers, says Gene Roberts, the former *New York Times* managing editor, "wages are actually falling." One reason, Roberts adds, is that small papers are being rapidly bought up by a new class of chain owners attracted to the relatively high and stable small-paper profit margins (see "Small Links, Large Chain," page 13). But "often the buyer incurs a heavy debt load, which makes it harder to pay the \$8 to \$10 an hour salaries that are often the going rate at small daily newspapers."

Meanwhile, says Roberts, "there clearly are a lot of new jobs in the big cities and in the new media." So he sees a growing wage gap between the low-pay small newspaper jobs and the urbanized, higher-pay media jobs.

Troubles at *The Berkshire Eagle* in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, demonstrate how tough things can be at some small papers. In 1995 the *Eagle* was sold to the MediaNews Group, headed by William Dean Singleton, known for buying distressed small papers at fire-sale prices. The editorial staff had an in-house union, but its contract was declared void after the sale, and the staff was fired and invited to re-apply. "We all interviewed for our jobs and around three quarters of the staff — now at about twenty-five full-time employees — were rehired at reduced salaries, usually reduced by about 30 percent." So says D.R. Bahlman, a reporter and former union spokesman who says his own former salary of \$38,000 was cut back to \$26,000. It is now \$28,000 due to raises. Editor David Scribner says the salary cuts ranged from 20 percent to 38 percent, and though he's given raises since then, he concedes that none of his reporters are earning as much as they were five years ago. He says the paper is "doing well," circulation is up — the latest figure is 32,000 — and one reporter recently won a couple of prizes.

◆
In some small markets the pool of writers for local newspapers seems largely unaffected by the trends that have been pushing wages up. In Connecticut, the editor-in-chief of a small weekly says that a lot of the owners he knows in the New England area continue to operate the way they have for years: "Most pay around \$300 a week to

college graduates, even if they have been working for several years. There still seems to be a large pool of journalists who will work for these small wages."

But the city editor of a small Texas daily says that his paper has indeed felt the effect of the forces lifting journalistic salaries. "We just went through a nightmare year of high turnover," he says. "As a small-market daily losing our best staff to major metros, we knew we had to change. We bumped up starting salaries 20 to 33 percent, and worked incredibly hard to get the candidates we wanted. They all took the job."

But in small-market television, says Vernon Stone, professor emeritus of journalism at the University of Missouri, "the stations continue to pay the same low salaries — under \$20,000 a year for many young broadcasters — that they have for years. I don't believe they can afford to pay much more. They just don't have the money. But they continue to have large pools of applicants who just want to work in TV."

Stone notes that a TV reporter is typically not as ready for an Internet journalism job as a print reporter, "so I don't think there is the same competition that small newspapers have been experiencing." A survey by the Radio-Television News Directors Association and Ball State University, based on 1997 data, put starting salaries for radio and TV journalists at \$12,000 to \$20,000. That, the survey noted, is lower than correctional officers (\$20,200 to \$22,600) or elementary school teachers (\$20,000 to \$25,000).

◆
Free-lance writers are also frustrated. Many have witnessed their stories, often first written for newspapers and magazines, migrating to digital outlets, with the writers getting no extra pay. In 1997 a group of writers supported by the National Writers Union lost a lawsuit against *The New York Times* on this issue, but scored several points on behalf of free-lance writers. The plaintiffs, including Jonathan Tasini, president of the 5,248-member union, have filed an appeal, contesting the judge's definition of a "revision." Oral arguments were presented before the second circuit U.S. Court of Appeals in April, but there has been no decision.

During the 1990s, more free-lancers have been told to sign contracts that require them to give up any redistribution right, according to the Writers Union. But the outcome of this battle is far from clear.

—Anne Colamosca

BURNOUT

Journalism can be a hard-knock life of intense competition, long hours, deadline pressure, physical danger, and raging ambition. For many, that adds up to more stress, worry, anxiety, internal conflict, and trauma than a person can handle. What happens then? Is there a strategy for coping?

BY JOANMARIE KALTER

Like Seamans, then a Miami-based correspondent for NBC, remembers the day he picked up the phone to hear there had been a break-out at an immigration detention center nearby. What he remembers next is that he forgot.

"It just didn't register with me," he says. "The normal feelings just weren't there anymore. Nothing was important. It was total mental numbness! Literally!"

Though he had once been an unusually productive network correspondent, covering events in Europe from his post as network correspondent in Rome and the war in El Salvador from Miami — "I could get off the plane faster than anyone else. That was my skill," he says — he had begun to wear down when he hit his late forties. "I couldn't do it the way I was doing it before. I wasn't comprehending the stories as sharply." Still, it wasn't until his bureau chief, Don Browne, came rushing over to him later that day, outraged that they had missed the story, that Seamans was able to put a name to his own strange suffering. "I said, 'I think I am burning out.'"

Journalism has always been a stressful profession — a superheated combination of intense competition, deadline pressure, long hours, and low pay, with

the product of one's labors played out in public and carrying real stakes. A lot of that is what medical researchers call "good stress," the challenge of jumping on a stimulating story and giving it your all, the kind that leads Don Browne, now general manager of WTVJ-TV in Miami, to say, "I love stress! It's the thrill and appeal of this business."

But what can make stress unhealthy are jobs that carry responsibility but lack control — those in which a journalist must maintain high standards without sufficient staff or budget, for instance, or implement decisions with which he disagrees. Those were the findings of a survey, *Editors and Stress*, prepared by Robert Giles for the Associated Press Managing Editors Association in 1983. Giles, now executive director of the Media Studies Center in New York, found that nearly 40 percent of editors surveyed reported job-related health problems ranging from insomnia to alcoholism and hypertension — up from closer to 30 percent cited in a similar study in 1979.

Since then, there has been tremendous change in journalism, and there remains tremendous uncertainty. Many newsrooms are increasingly profit-driven and short-staffed at the expense of journalistic values. New technology makes it possible, as Browne says, "to do more and more and more, faster and faster and faster." And though no one has specifically measured the incidence of "bad stress" among journalists since Giles's survey, recent related findings suggest it may be alarming.

Job satisfaction among journalists, for instance, has dropped steeply in recent decades. David Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, journalism teachers at Indiana University and co-authors of *The American Journalist in the 1990s*, found that 49 percent of journalists surveyed across six media were very satisfied in 1971. That figure had slipped to 40 percent in 1982 — and to 27 percent by 1992.

Many are still happy with their work, says Paul Voakes, assistant professor of journalism at Indiana University, who more recently surveyed newspaper journalists for the American Society of Newspaper Editors. Yet he found that significantly fewer journalists feel satisfied with the quality of their papers — 34 percent rated them excellent in 1988 compared to only 14 percent in 1996. More journalists than ever plan to leave before retirement — fully 45 percent. Women in particular want out — only one in five young women in 1996 said they'd stay in the field. Those most likely to cite stress as a reason for leaving were in their forties. Indeed, for them, said Voakes, "It looked like a cry for help."

That conclusion is echoed in dozens of conversations with journalists around the country: "It's much more stressful now," says Stuart Zanger, 47, whose thirty-year career has taken him from police reporter at City News Bureau in Chicago to news director at WCPO-TV in Cincinnati. "There's almost a palpable sense of desperation out there that I

Joanmarie Kalter, a free-lance journalist based in Montclair, New Jersey, can be reached at jmkalter@aol.com.

don't remember feeling ten or twelve years ago. It's different."

Ironically, in any field, those most in danger of burnout are often "the best and brightest," says Dr. Lyle Miller, specialist in stress disorders and co-author of *The Stress Solution*. These are the people who are "dedicated, ambitious, idealistic self-starters — exactly the kind of people you want to hire," he says. "They work hardest to please and go the longest for the least payoff." Faced with frustration and lacking fulfillment, these workers don't back off — instead, they redouble their efforts.

"I was the worst offender!" admits Jill Geisler, former news director at WITI-TV in Milwaukee. "I somehow thought that if I worked harder than everybody else, suffered more than anybody else, put in more time, worried a little more, that that made me a better manager . . . I never missed a newscast . . . I was online at home day and night, I

got up early on Saturday or Sunday morning to log on because the rookie producer on board may not have had things spelled right . . . That all seems admirable in a manager but could have been delegated, or even bypassed!" Geisler wisely checked out before she burned out, and last year took a teaching position at the Poynter Institute.

But journalists may be especially vulnerable. They are witnesses to an often painful and chaotic world, yet as objective observers, must stifle their own reactions to it and persist in the face of difficulties. "How am I even going to know how I feel about anything?," Ruth Hammond, now a writer at the Pittsburgh *City Paper*, remembers wondering when she started some eighteen years ago. "The job teaches you to ignore all your own emotional and physical needs."

And it may be doubly difficult to back off because journalists bring to their craft a sense of mission. "We'll work any number of hours and do whatever it takes, because what we're doing is important and valuable," says Jack Croft. Yet as managing editor of the *Pottstown Mercury* in Pennsylvania, Croft found himself so short-staffed that if even one person was on vacation it

"became a death march," he says — not to do anything meaningful or enterprising — "just to get the paper off the floor every night."

"That mission gets exploited," he says. "[Overwork] becomes the expectation in a very competitive business where there are a hundred others who will do your job."

According to psychologists, the warning signs can include: not eating or eating too much; not sleeping or sleeping too much. Your hobbies slide; you lose your creativity. You're hyper-aroused, you can't focus, you feel victimized and moody. Should you press on despite these signs, and persist in pursuing unattainable goals, says Miller, you'll reach a point of physical and psychological exhaustion — burnout.

Take heed: "Often the last to see these warning signs is . . . you guessed it, men," says David Welsh, a psychologist in Fort Worth who works with professional groups nationwide. Croft didn't fully realize what had happened to him until he left daily journalism in 1994, after some eigh-

teen years, to become managing editor of Prevention Health books. "One of the first chapters I wrote [for a book titled *Total Health for Men*] was on burnout. I was going through the warning signs thinking, 'Damn, this was me.'"

At the same time, however, burnout is being seen as more than just a personal problem, the blinkered vision of some overly driven individuals. It is also due to the objective demands of the workplace. "Twenty years ago, if you said journalism was stressful, the response would have been, 'So what? Today there's an increase in consciousness about its risks,'" says John Russial, associate professor of journalism at the University of Oregon and a newspaper consultant.

One of the most devastating sources of stress is covering traumatic events. New research is just beginning to show that, untreated, it can have serious long-term effects on the ability of journalists to function, according to Roger Simp-

son, associate professor of communications at the University of Washington, Seattle, who recently conducted a survey on the subject. Five years ago, he says, he probably would not have been able to get it published.

Simpson surveyed 131 journalists at six newspapers in Washington and Michigan, and found that the degree of post-traumatic symptoms they described were comparable to those reported in similar studies by Australian firefighters who had recently battled a brush fire, and by Norwegian soldiers caught in an avalanche. The difference, however, was that firefighters and soldiers routinely receive a "debriefing" — a kind of therapeutic counseling to ease their distress.

Like soldiers, journalists typically experience a delayed reaction. At the time, they can focus fiercely on the task at hand, asking questions, writing down notes, taking refuge in the distance and control their job provides; they may not even know they've been affected. Later, however, some suffer from fearfulness, insomnia, emotional numbness, and intense, intrusive memories that bring back the full force of their horror.

"After Rwanda, it took me a year before I even learned how to sleep again," says Donatella Lorch, who covered the genocide for *The New York Times*. Once back at her home in Nairobi, "I remember walk-

ing to my window and seeing my garden-er with a machete. I instinctively ran to other side of the room. I wasn't even able to control myself . . . It stays with you, yes, it does stay with you. I left Africa and had six months of darkness in my soul, a really deep depression." Keith Miller, a London-based correspondent for NBC, notes that easy air travel can make such experiences even more ghastly and surreal. When he covered Rwanda, "We left Kigali and that afternoon were at a garden party in Wimbledon. People said, 'Where were you?' I just couldn't talk about it."

Yet journalists don't need to whip across continents to be affected by the tragedies they cover. Simpson found that statistically those most likely to have trauma symptoms were those who had covered fatal car accidents. These journalists were troubled by details like

THE STOCKHOLM/VOH PHOTO

THE WORKPLACE

the body in the car or the Coke bottle in the road in some cases many years later. Yet on small and mid-sized papers, as Simpson notes, such an assignment is a very common experience for even rookie reporters.

Traumatic stress, of course, is only exacerbated by the long hours that were legendary in journalism even before the wave of corporate buying and selling that has eviscerated newsroom resources. "The stresses are so much greater today because more and more ownership is concentrated in publicly traded companies looking to increase their profits on a quarter by quarter basis," says Jill Geisler. "As you can't always increase revenue, you decrease expenses, and the fastest way to do that is to reduce head count."

In her case, when her Milwaukee station switched its affiliation from CBS to Fox, its newshole ballooned from three and a half hours a day to seven hours; the size of her staff rose at first from fifty-six to one hundred, but was then cut to eighty-five. "We are all trying to do way too much news with way too few people. A lot of us are running on empty," she says. The average tenure of a TV news director is now about two years, and Geisler says producers, for whom "there's almost a bottomless pit of demands," tend to burn out within three to five.

At newspapers, the stresses can be most intense for mid-level editors. Bill Sutley cites his experience as city editor at the *Hattiesburg American* in Mississippi, a Gannett paper, where the pressure to keep down overtime for reporters could leave the editors, who had no such protections, wrung out. "They would hit their maximum and if a big story broke, you're responsible. You'd have to plug the holes. That's when it kills you . . . Just hook me up to a Diet Coke drip and put a Merit 100 in my hand!"

Though the company encouraged further training, Sutley had no time for it. And while he averaged sixty hours a week, in today's corporate environment, even that didn't seem enough. He remembers doing a solid job on the coverage of a double murder but his boss was more concerned that he set up a focus group on community issues. Finally, though there was much that Sutley loved about daily journalism, he left after twenty years, taking a 50 percent cut in pay to work in university public relations.

But it's not just budget cuts wrought by cost-conscious corporations that have increased the stress, say journalists today. The technology that often liberates them can also at times enslave them. It has made newspaper editors into page designers and systems managers whose knowledge of Quark XPress is even more important than their mastery of English, says John Russial, who studies newsroom organization. It puts them at the mercy of machines that suddenly slow down when a new software program is loaded, or freeze up at 3 A.M., giving rise to the newest of trendy terms, "computer rage."

Don Browne bemoans the stress of beepers and e-mail. "On a three-hour plane flight, you used to be able to rest, reflect, focus, and renew," he says. "Now there's nowhere you can't get a phone call. There's no escape!" Online reporters must work so rapidly and relentlessly they're essentially just transcribing their notes. At its most absurd, the new technology has tethered TV journalists onto rooftops where they may stand for hours on end feeding "live hits" via satellite — a process that prevents them from actually gathering any news.

When the U.S. bombed Baghdad last December, Donatella Lorch, by then an NBC News correspondent, had three bathroom breaks in twenty hours, so busy was she doing live question-and-answer hits with an anchor for network, cable, and allied stations. As her colleague at NBC, Keith Miller, describes it, "You are given a countdown to live, requiring a very clear head and . . . accompanied by a serious adrenaline rush. Three minutes later you're down. Then you've got to come back up again. When you do that for fifteen hours or more it can be really debilitating."

Indeed, within a few short years, technology has transformed much of the business of journalism, and what is perhaps most stressful of all, will continue to change it — and soon — in ways that no one can yet predict. In his survey for ASNE, Paul Voakes found that a majority fear for the future of newspapers — 55 percent expect they'll be a less important part of American life in ten years. In TV news, notes Stuart Zanger, former news director of WCPO in Cincinnati, "the viewers are going away and no one knows where this is going to end." Five years ago, his station was number-one in its market with a 14 rating for the 11 P.M. news; this past November it won with an

11 rating. "Where did those viewers go?" Soon to come are multiplex digital signals and an Internet as smooth and quick as a TV picture. "There's a lot of stress out there," he says.

But perhaps the simplest truth about stressed-out journalists today is that — whatever the profession's new challenges — the work they found exhilarating in their twenties can be exhausting in their forties. Dale Russakoff, at 46, a New York-based reporter for *The Washington Post*, has been anxiously juggling her job with a family life that includes a house, a husband, two children, and an ill, elderly mother. When she returned from a week away in Littleton, Colorado, glowing with the satisfaction of having worked full throttle with talented comrades on a story of major significance, she said, "I realized it's not just me, it's the circumstances. I've been trying to do the same job at the same level as when I was twenty-five and didn't have those other responsibilities."

Unfortunately, many journalists still won't admit they're burning out on the job, says Robert Giles. The culture of bravado that fans the flames also discourages them from slowing down or seeking counseling. They must be seen as war-horses, impervious to trauma, fatigue, and fear, leaping to answer the call.

Though *The New York Times*, as part of its Employee Assistance Program, offers a stress debriefing to journalists exposed to trauma — in which they simply discuss the experience and their feelings — Patricia Drew, its director, admits they're initially hesitant to use it: "They're afraid they won't be sent out on the next tough story," she says. And while a few corporations have now begun to seriously restructure their workplace demands — Hewlett-Packard and Ernst & Young among them — Lyle Miller, who is setting up a stress management program for employees of IBM, knows of no such effort by any news organization. "The only thing they take seriously is that stress is a good subject for lots of articles" — as many as 20,000 a year, he estimates. Roger Simpson goes so far as to call it "a silent scourge."

Though it may be silent, the effects of such stress are real. How can journalists communicate what's new and fascinating in the world around them if they themselves have shut down psychologically, Simpson wonders. Even worse, "Journalists have serious responsibilities in chal-

lenging public institutions. If they are not focused, not thinking clearly, don't have energy — those are serious problems."

Also serious are the effects on their personal lives and health. Women, in particular, seem to bear the brunt of family anxieties. Writer LynNell Hancock says she was "burning out big time" at *Newsweek*, knowing her children were sometimes home alone at night while she was delayed in the office. She winces at the time she brought home pretzel boxes from the office vending machine for her children's breakfast, not having had a chance to buy groceries. "You feel like a terrible mother!" she says. Another writer, who worked fifty-five-hour weeks while suffering with health problems, feeling she had to prove herself anew with every changing owner of her paper, finally had a life-threatening emergency. "I remember thinking before they wheeled me into surgery that I had let my job kill me and what an idiot I was," she says.

In the end, stress is driving away many of journalism's most experienced and creative people. Stuart Zanger, who earned distinction as head of the investigative unit and news director at WCPO in Cincinnati, and who had injured his neck in a car accident, was struck when his doctor told him, "You will never feel completely well until you deal with the stress in your life." Last April, he left his job. "I was afraid that just over the next hill I wasn't going to be able to maintain the quality," he says. "I didn't have the strength after a couple of years of eighty-hour weeks to re-invent it. I needed to get away and catch my breath."

But for many people, there are ways to survive and even thrive less stressfully in journalism, say psychologists and career consultants. First, however, they must challenge some of their own assumptions.

Take that culture of bravado, for instance. It is a sign of strength, not weakness, to say you cannot take on every assignment, that you must conserve some energy and maintain some balance, says stress specialist David Welsh. "It means you're self-aware, realistic, and responsible with your own resources," he says. And burnout, once recognized, can be a healthy thing, adds Marti Chaney, a career consultant in Portland, Oregon, who has counseled dozens of journalists. "People are so afraid of it. But it means

you've grown, you've changed, and it's time to reevaluate."

She compares burnout to a case of the flu, when "even your favorite food like chocolate doesn't sound good," and cautions journalists not to make radical decisions in the thick of it. In fact, they often don't have to change much in order to have changed a lot. Chaney cites a woman at *The Oregonian* who felt powerless, but once she dared to ask — in this case, that she work three days for ten hours each rather than five days for eight hours — she got just what she wanted. Another, who had children, switched from hard news to education, a beat that reflected her own changing interests.

Chaney suggests presenting management with options, looking for ways to meet overseers' needs as well as one's own — as in "I'll reduce my hours, but take on this . . ." Journalists should be more assertive and communicative with their boss — whether that's an editor or a station owner. "Yes, I'll be glad to fit that in," Miller suggests you say, "but I'll have to drop something else. Tell me which one."

They should recognize their job is objectively stressful, advises David Welsh. Do the obvious: maintain a nutritious diet, sleep, rediscover hobbies, make time for family and friends outside of the job, he says. Take advantage of stress debriefings — they do help, says Roger Simpson. So do support groups, whether meeting compassionate colleagues for lunch or finding fellowship via e-mail.

Don Harting, a free-lancer in upstate New York whose stress drove him to rage, feels it ultimately brought out the best in him: "It forced me to strengthen my faith and look within myself for the hard changes I needed to make." He began keeping a journal to help him identify his own feelings, what made him angry and how he controlled it. He continues to be helped by prayer, exercise, and keeping the Sabbath, he says.

Every so often Donatella Lorch says to hell with the stance of detached observer and acts forcefully on her own emotions. While stationed at the Albanian border last May, covering the refugees streaming in from Kosovo, she found a six-year-old boy ill with cancer and arranged, with the help of Italian doctors, to have him medevaced to Italy for treatment. "That helps with all the stress," she says. "One producer told me to stop playing God. Another said, 'If playing God works, why not?'"

The bottom line for some journalists is that they may have to ease their standards. Welsh advises they give their work their best shot, cross their fingers, and let it go. As he puts it, "An ethicist may say that's a sellout, but as a psychologist I say that's survival."

Ike Seamans did survive, though his burnout lasted a year. "Don [Browne, his bureau chief and friend] covered up for me," he says. "He used tough love, he got hard on me but with a gentle touch." Seamans stopped drinking, exercised, and made a conscious effort to put a more positive spin on life, something he still works on today. He went on to head up NBC bureaus in Tel Aviv and Moscow and now, as senior correspondent back at WTVJ in Miami, he feels, at 61, that he's doing the best work of his career — complex investigative pieces on biological weapons, white supremacists, affirmative action.

"I came out the other end whole," he says. It's still a stressful profession and he's still a hard-driving guy — in fact, he had a heart attack three years ago right on camera and kept working — but now, at least, he can finally say, "This is not only my best work, it's the most enjoyable." ■



SUBSCRIPTION

PROBLEMS?
INQUIRIES?
ORDERS?

CALL TOLL FREE
888-425-7782
(888) 4 CJR SUB

Subscribers outside
the U.S. may call
(614) 382-3322.

The newsroom at Fox
News Online

WHAT I SAW IN THE DIGITAL SEA

*After a Two-Year Immersion in Online News,
a Journalist Comes Up for Air*

BY FRANK HOUSTON



It is hard to believe, but in 1996 the Web was still relatively novel. That year a *New Yorker* cartoon lampooned the early hype with a sidewalk doomsayer holding a sign whose message, THE END IS NEAR, is trailed by the requisite Web address, www.endnear.com.

Frank Houston (frankhouston@hotmail.com), a former CJR assistant editor, is a free-lance writer in print and online, and continues to write an entertainment column for Fox News. He's still under thirty.

Soon *The Simpsons* took aim: Homer discovers the Internet, launches a new media company, Compuglobalhypermegamnet, and, before he can figure out what he's selling, is bought out by Bill Gates. *New Yorker* culture critic Kurt Andersen asked in early 1998 whether the Web was a mere "digital bubble," and the online magazine *Salon* took umbrage. "It's no bubble," *Salon* said. "It's a tide." *Salon* seems to be on the winning side, as Internet stock mania and online success stories fatten portfolios and validate the Web, at least for investors.

But what about journalists? What is news on the Web becoming?

Twenty-six months is a long time in new media, long enough to watch Web journalism transform itself and seek its

place in the mediasphere. I was on hand when it was learning to crawl.

My online career began Sunday, October 6, 1996, the day Clinton and Dole met in Hartford for the first debate of the 1996 presidential race, the first election to receive extensive coverage on the Internet by most major news organizations, including mine — Fox News Online (www.foxnews.com). My career in new media ended — for now, at least — on Christmas Eve, 1998, just eight days after the year's dominating news story, a runaway train of a scandal, entered its sobering denouement with Clinton's impeachment. In the more than two years in between, as writer and editor at Fox News, I watched as several so-called Internet-defining news moments —

TONY WANG

notably MISSION TO MARS, DEATH OF A PRINCESS, and, of course, THE STARR REPORT — came and went.

Housed in Manhattan's Silicon Alley and ringed with suspended televisions, Fox News's sleek newsroom suggests the bridge of the starship *Enterprise*. Little paper is put to use. Work flow is regulated by a piece of software ominously called the "integrator." E-mail is the dominant form of interoffice dialogue. Within days of starting my job as a feature writer, I realize that e-mail is also a venue for disjointed, almost subliminal communication. I am struck by the number of conversations I have via e-mail with people who might sit five or ten feet away, conversations that are never vocalized or, sometimes, even acknowledged.

As in most online news organizations, the vast majority of staff members are under thirty. The salaries of reporters, producers, and editors range from \$30K to \$60K, far exceeding what a newbie journalist might encounter at a small daily newspaper or on the lower rungs of some magazines.

I am hired by a twenty-six-year-old executive editor who reports to a twenty-eight-year-old executive producer. My job is to create feature stories that push the technological and interactive envelopes, working with a graphic designer, two producers, a photo editor, and, usually, a video producer. The goal is to see where the technology takes us, and to let a general "playground" atmosphere prevail.

When we sit down in a group to talk about the news and generate story ideas, I can't resist the notion that we are kids, playing a game of "meeting." At one such "meeting," for example, story ideas are continually greeted with movie references: a story pitch about the business that undergirds the extreme sports trend calls forth memories of *Rollerball*. A discussion about cloning (and the speculation that humans might someday be cloned simply for organ transplanting) conjures up Michael Crichton's *Coma*.

In many meetings a protocol is observed in which a football is passed back and forth between designated speakers, much in the way power is conferred by the conch in *Lord of the Flies*. At one point, young managers promise "Friday movies" on the ring of TVs; at another, a newsroom pool table. Neither materializes.

There are advantages to our youthful

outlook, as when Fox News Online produces its first feature, Tale of the Tape, measuring candidates Clinton and Dole like a pair of squared-off boxers. In addition to charting the two politicians' positions on issues, the feature explores the generational differences between them. The category of Most Popular Television Show, Year of Birth, goes like this: "Clinton: *Bonanza*; Dole: Television not invented yet."

As the year goes on, Fox publishes several accessible and solid "explainers," including one on the federal deficit (remember that?), replete with a Debt Clock that continues ticking today (www.FoxNews.com/news/features/budget/index.sml). We do another on the Dow, which is then bearing down on 7,000 (remember that?). We also produce a report on the fat federal subsidies received by Florida sugar barons. This includes a database of their Political Action Committee contributions to congressional campaigns, a video from the spring 1997 floor debate about their subsidies, and a state-by-state tally of every representative's vote alongside the value of the sugar donation he or she received.

Following our technological mandate, we also make some creative innovations. Early in 1997, just after IBM's Deep Blue computer defeats chess champ Garry Kasparov, we find an intriguing robotics experiment at the State University of New York, Buffalo, aimed at creating artificially intelligent robots that may someday service a space station. We create a feature about artificial intelligence around it, combining video and text in a new way (<http://www.FoxNews.com/scitech/features/intelligence/index.sml>). The centerpiece is a standard, if lengthy, video package about the robot, named Cassie.

But we add another layer: at appropriate moments, links appear in a separate window that bring the visitor to different pieces of explanatory text. There is also a meticulously accurate graphical representation of Cassie's thought process. This feature, which involves the full-time efforts of five staffers for several weeks, not to mention a free-lance video crew in Buffalo, is not only time-consuming to produce — it is also time-consuming for a site visitor to digest.

Whether we are ahead of the game or missing the point, these playground experiments suddenly began to look

like time capsules. The Web, we soon find, is moving in a different direction. The features are too complicated and too deep for readers and for us. They often take three or more weeks to produce and contain too many pages.

The artificial intelligence piece, *Inventing Intelligence*, is one of the most popular features we ever produce. But that means it gets about 7,000 page views — the number of pages, and thus, advertising banners, served up to readers — for the week it is on the site. Top news stories routinely reach that many readers in a matter of hours. The features' low page views do little to justify the considerable amount of effort and time it takes to publish them. Meanwhile, with audience measurements telling us that most people spend only a matter of seconds on a news Web page, whether on Foxnews.com or just about anywhere else, it becomes clear that our sprawling and eclectic stories are not to be the site's bread and butter.

The Web is so new to us. We assume that it will create fascinating new ways to tell stories, that we "content providers" will determine what the content is to be. But the Internet is a fathomless ocean and technology is like an ever-moving shark. We are too enthralled, too busy, and too slow to see that we are powerless to guide it. We swim along like pilot fish near the maw of the great digital beast.

Technology's thrust, it turns out, is to satisfy the need for speed. The emphasis shifts to shorter, more frequent stories and breaking news. Around the same time, in the summer of 1997, I shift too: after being a writer for nine months, I become deputy editor, overseeing the site's staff of ten reporters and copy editors, and its "original content." Managing breaking news in a medium that is making the notion of a news "cycle" obsolete is 180 degrees from the long-term, in-depth feature work. Over time I find that news elsewhere on the Web is moving rapidly in the same direction.

A Jupiter Communications survey would soon reveal what I was seeing as an editor: "Online users are gravitating to the Web . . . to collect top headlines and breaking news." This is as true for Fox as it is for our competitors, CNN, MSNBC, and ABCNews.com. Features come fewer and farther between, and we are faced with a greater challenge:

NEW MEDIA

how to provide "top headlines and breaking news" that are somehow different from those of the wire services, to which Fox, like just about every news Web site, subscribes.

Jupiter would also touch on this problem: "Newswires, predominantly a service developed for news providers, are gaining more acceptance in the public

HOW DOES A NEWS SITE DISTINGUISH ITSELF FROM THE WIRES?

eye. Since search engines pull stories straight from the wires, news services such as The Associated Press, Bloomberg, and Reuters are becoming more familiar to consumers."

In truth, the wires dominate much of the Web's news — a consequence of the mad dash for headlines. Broadcasters and newspapers, the parents of most online news sites, arrive at this need for wire content from different directions. Both result from tight budgets in a medium where most players, waiting for advertising revenues to really take off, are still asking, like Homer on that *Simpsons* episode, "Can I have some money now?" The broadcasters (Fox, CNN, ABC, MSNBC) have their editorial resources in video and little experience in — or money for — the reporting/writing staffs that could compete with the wire services. They can't beat them, so they pay for and publish them instead.

Newspapers, on the other hand, aren't accustomed to publishing on the wire's schedule — a continual stream of rewrites, adds, and new leads. Consequently, the news content of their sites is often either the repurposed morning paper, or — you guessed it — hot off the wires. When an Amtrak train crashes outside Chicago in March, for example, *The New York Times* and other newspaper sites go with wire copy on their home pages. In the next morning's paper edition, of course, the story has staff bylines. In that interim period after

news occurs, how does a news site distinguish itself from a wire service?

The question takes me from puzzlement to disenchantment, particularly when, five months into my job as deputy editor, all news becomes a static-filled backdrop to the one true Big Story.

In the early days, the Dickensian name of Matt Drudge seems as obscure as that of any one of a thousand college students who might set up vanity Web pages, and, while I occasionally visit www.thedrudge.com, I pay the Winchell of the Web little heed. When I receive a Drudge e-mail bulletin in late January that outlines *Newsweek's* decision to hold Michael Isikoff's story about Linda Tripp's tapes, the idea of a presidential affair strikes me as overly familiar. Without devoting much thought to it, I hit "delete." Who knew?

As The Story gains momentum, its sheer power and velocity determine the way news plays on the Internet. It is fast and nearly cycle-less, very competitive and, at the same time, repetitive — a lot, in short, like cable television news.

The Story plays itself out over the rest of my time at Fox. Each new development — Monica's immunity deal with Ken Starr, the DNA test, and so on — corresponds to a boost, or "spike," in traffic. The definition of a big day for a major news story at Fox, in terms of page views, moves from 20,000 to 30,000, even 40,000 to 600,00 for the release of the Starr report on the Internet on September 11. While the numbers usually dip again, they almost always level off higher than they'd been the day before the peak.

On and on it goes, until page views on the Fox site as a whole roughly doubled from late '97 to late '98 — from 600,000 to 1.2 million. They hit an all-time high of 2.2 million on the afternoon of December 16, that unsettling moment when Henry Hyde's impeachment hearings share the screen with green-hued images of anti-aircraft gunfire over Baghdad. People from throughout the company — Rupert Murdoch's News America Digital Publishing — gather in small groups in front of the overhead televisions that encircle the newsroom.

The reporters who will cobble together copy to post on our site are getting their information from television. And the Web is at that moment recycling it to millions of news surfers, most of them probably turning to the Web at work because there are no televisions on their

desks. For all its technological dazzlement, the Internet can't yet improve on the captivating grip of the moving image.

But the Web can co-opt it, and many broadcast sites, like Fox, do just that with an extensive use of video from their parent corporations. "Broadcast" initiatives are also under way that will offer more video content to surfers with high-capacity cable modems.

As I watch everyone around me riveted to televisions, including headline writers and reporters, I am seeing Web journalism for what it is becoming: a machine moving at the speed of the wires, in terms of content, and in the direction of television, in terms of form. Experiments in storytelling are on an indefinite hiatus. It will only a matter of days before I leave the job

Journalism on the Internet may be destined to become souped-up television news, but souped-up is the operative phrase. If you came to the Web for news on a wide variety of important stories — the bombing in Kosovo, say, or the war of nerves with Iraq — chances are you could have found more than enough background, in the form of historical timelines, summaries, interactive maps, interviews, and explanatory graphics, to educate yourself.

Newspapers can be good at this depth and context thing, but you won't see them publishing so much on a daily basis, unless newsprint is to be suddenly given away free. And television news just doesn't have the time to spare. Even INVESTIGATING CLINTON — the news package we create for the tangled tale leading from Whitewater to Monica via Paula — features lots of video, source material, timelines, and historical context. I came to really see what others have preached — that one value of Web journalism is context and depth, accessible any time, any day.

Do readers really want that? They haven't demonstrated the same appetite for it that they do for top stories. But at least the stuff is there, and I think news organizations like Fox know such depth may be the only way to distinguish themselves from a wire service.

So why did I jump ship? Much as I can see the potential value in Web journalism's bottomless newshole, my initial attraction to the medium had more to do with the idea of making innovating news,

not just appending a library to it. Then there was the pace. Too often, the Internet struck me as no more than another product of the age's insatiable appetite for speed, and I've never been one to hang on every new breaking headline — especially when the headlines come five minutes apart, as was sometimes the case. In the end, I was Drugged out.

I guess I'm not the only one who's worried about the real place of journalists on the Web. In one of my last few weeks at Fox, I read about Jupiter's Digital News Forum at the CNN Center last December in Atlanta. The two-day forum was convened to discuss how the Web "affects the news cycle of conventional media outlets, and poses the question of whether or not the giants of traditional news delivery can survive in such a fast-paced environment," in the words of Jupiter's press release.

I noticed some of the questions that were to be addressed in the form of panel topics, including an "executive roundtable" titled "The End Of Journalism?" as well as "Reinventing The News Cycle" and one about how to deal with the challenge of being dominated by the likes of the AP — "Competing Against Convenience: Attempting To Maneuver Past The Wire." Maybe the conversation that had seemed beside the point in the Web's earliest days — the one we'd been too busy to have before about the ultimate shape of journalism online — was beginning to take place in a serious way. It's time.

In the early days in our little feature shop at Fox, we were too young even to realize that such basic questions had to be answered before experiments like ours could be worthwhile — if they ever will be. I, for one, am still betting on innovation. But a new form of storytelling, something original and unique to online journalism, is the kind of breakthrough that can come only when a medium feels comfortable in its own skin.

Journalism has always gone where technology has led, whether it was into the radio or onto the tube. So it seems that, as the Internet goes, so goes journalism. But beyond headline news and television-plus, where it's leading now is difficult to see. We swim along in front of the shark, in front of technology's great open maw, as if we were leading. But we're not. ■

THE WATER'S FINE

From Web to Print — and Back Again. Another Journalist, Another Perspective

BY JONATHAN DUBE



I loved online journalism. But when I completed the new media program at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism two years ago, I felt new media's time had yet to arrive. As I sat in front of a *New York Times* computer during a job tryout, shoveling stories from the print edition onto the Web site, I thought to myself, "This doesn't feel like journalism."

So I turned down a producer job with the *Times* and headed south to work as a crime reporter for *The Charlotte Observer*. Instead of sitting in front of a computer typing URLs, I experimented with story structure, practiced narrative writing, occasionally turned the inverted pyramid on its head. But a strange thing happened. After working with new media, writing for a newspaper felt limiting, almost one-dimensional. I'd profile an eccentric artist with a quirky accent, say, or cover the tumultuous gusts of a hurricane. But I felt I was cheating my readers by not sharing those sounds or moving images with them. When writing articles about the state's restaurant inspection system or sex offender registry, I couldn't give readers all the information they deserved in the newspaper's limited columns. So I put the databases on the *Observer's* Web site.

Meanwhile, I watched online journalism evolve. As more people turned to the Web for news, media organizations devoted more resources to it, and the journalism seemed to improve. Specialty sites, such as CNET and TheStreet.com, soon became essential for anyone interested in technology or finance, and even the general news sites became required reading. Along with millions of others, I found myself leaping online for the latest in the Clinton scandal. By the time the newspaper arrived each morning, its news seemed passé.

So earlier this year I returned to new media, taking a job in Seattle as a writer

Jonathan Dube (jondube@reporters.net) is a senior associate producer for ABC-NEWS.com.

and producer for ABCNEWS.com. I'm glad I jumped back in. In many ways online journalism is more challenging than print, and not just because I have to juggle a video camera, digital camera, and microphone along with my pen and notepad. It can be difficult to break away from the conventional formula that seems to define much of online news — text-centric stories with a few links, graphics, and audio or video clips tacked on, almost as an afterthought. So, before tackling a subject, I try to determine the best way to tell the story — through some combination of text, audio, video, photos, clickable graphics, chats, message boards, polls, or quizzes . . . or something entirely different.

For example, after flying to Littleton, Colorado, to cover the Columbine High School shooting, I wrote articles describing the thousands of sympathetic strangers bringing flowers and notes to a memorial at the school. But words couldn't quite capture the raw emotions of what I witnessed. So my colleagues and I decided to recreate the memorial experience online. Visitors to ABCNEWS.com took an interactive tour of the memorial, viewing the images of teddy bears and flowers and reading the words left in memory of those killed. Then they could post their own tributes and read messages other readers had left. Nearly 800 people wrote tributes, describing how the tragedy had touched their lives.

Online journalism excites me because of its potential for improving our connections with readers. While covering the Littleton shooting, I answered questions from readers in two hour-long online chats, which together attracted more than 1,600 people. This was draining but rewarding. Knowing what questions remained on readers' minds helped guide my future reporting. At the same time, I got to tell readers many of the details I had gathered that hadn't fit neatly into my stories. The chat transcripts became, in effect, another story about the shootings — one that the readers helped create.

What I find so exciting about online journalism is not just the chance to tell stories in new, interactive ways. It's that these new media tools and techniques help me bring readers a truer picture of the world. ■

RETHINKING THE RACE BEAT

Newsrooms are searching for new ways to cover ethnic minorities. Do you need to be a specialist to do it right?

BY BARRY YEOMAN

Given Atlanta's place in modern American history, it made sense for its hometown newspaper, the *Journal-Constitution*, to assign a reporter to cover civil rights full-time. Until recently, that job belonged to Hollis Towns. An eleven-year veteran of the paper, Towns reported on church burnings, black voting patterns, and the legacy of the Million Man March. He traveled to Alabama to talk with the men and women who had participated in the Montgomery bus boycott forty years earlier. And he wrote an intimate profile of Coretta Scott King, the product of her first in-depth interview in several years.

Towns was pleased with his work, and so were his bosses. He considered nothing sacred, writing articles critical of revered groups like the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Center for Democratic Renewal. But as he cranked out stories, the *Journal-Constitution's* editors wondered whether the paper was taking the right approach to race. Was it focusing too much on political organizations and not enough on the day-in, day-out struggles of black and white Atlantans? Was it vesting too much responsibility in a single reporter, rather than inculcating a racial consciousness throughout the entire staff? Convinced there was a better way

to cover Atlanta's most ubiquitous issue, in 1997 the paper abolished the civil rights beat and reassigned Towns to cover housing. For a while, it maintained a more general race-relations beat, but it disbanded that too, deciding that every reporter should be required to cover the racial angles of their own stories.

"Race is a factor in virtually everything we write in this community," says metro editor Mike King. "It's in the air we breathe. It's almost impossible to miss." Yet assigning a single reporter to cover racial issues, he contends, gave

others license to ignore the subject. "Once race was identified as the core of a story, whether it was in courts or police, it became an easy and convenient reason to say, 'Well, we can turn that over to the civil rights reporter.'"

The disbanding of the race beat had its intended effect, according to King. *Journal-Constitution* staffers took up the slack, exploring the role of race in college admissions, prison sentencing, and gubernatorial politics.

Still, without a writer whose primary expertise was race relations, important stories have fallen through the cracks. During SCLC's fortieth-anniversary convention in Atlanta, for example, 800 people attended a panel discussion featuring Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, Harvard professor Cornel West, and SCLC president Joseph Lowery on the future of the civil rights movement.

A groundbreaking series on Latino migration was produced by these four members of the *San Jose Mercury News's* race and demographics team: from left, Edwin Garcia, reporter; Richard Koci Hernandez, photographer; Jeanne Belding, editor; and Ben Stocking, reporter



Barry Yeoman is the senior staff writer for The Independent, a weekly news-magazine in Durham, North Carolina.

"There were any number of stories that could have been developed from the people in that room — a room that was packed to the rafters, filled with debate," says Towns, now an assistant city editor. But the news was relegated to the bottom three paragraphs of a 300-word inside-local story speculating on SCLC's next president, written by a summer intern who had spent the earlier part of the month covering animal diseases and the weather. "I thought it was a little strange to be given that assignment," says the former intern, Mike Householder, who now works for The Associated Press.

Still uncertain that it has found the magic formula, the *Journal-Constitution* is continuing its internal discussions. It's not alone. As the national dialogue on race grows louder, as diversity becomes a buzzword within the industry, as the media recognize their potential audiences among blacks, Latinos, and Asian-Americans, newspapers and broadcast organizations are grappling with how best to cover ethnic minorities and the issues they face.

For some, the answer is obvious: race should be covered like any other complex issue, such as education or military affairs, with specialized journalists who have developed expertise and sources. Jonathan Tilove, the race reporter for Newhouse News Service, says his depth of knowledge means he can cover race with self-assurance, something most journalists can't do.

"At some point you become familiar with the terrain and different schools of thought, and you can make connections that you might not otherwise feel confident to make," says Tilove. "A lot of people approach it gingerly and might worry about how they write about it. If you know what you're doing, you can say, 'Okay, I'm not worried about simple-minded criticisms, because I can explain it in a more complex way.'"

Tilove has produced lengthy and nuanced features on the growing number of Americans who hold citizenship in two countries; the current-day implications of Thomas Jefferson's affair with his slave, Sally Hemings; and the source of President Clinton's support among black voters. The richness of his stories argues strongly for the need for reporters who are steeped in racial issues. Writing about Clinton and

African Americans, for example, he explains "the abiding cultural affinity and comfort level, rooted in a struggling Southern Baptist upbringing." He also discusses the "almost necessarily vast capacity for forgiveness" among descendants of slaves, and the "keen sensitivity to distinguishing private from public morality."

But some critics downplay the amount of expertise required to cover race. "A military reporter needs to know a lot about weapons and planes and tanks and ships. Many of the people on medical beats have years of science training," observes Rod Prince, executive producer for the weekend editions

The situation isn't much better in television newsrooms, where the senior rims sometimes look as segregated as church on Sunday morning. "Internally," says one producer at ABC News, "we refer to the opening of *World News Tonight*, where they show the working newsroom, as the Promise Keepers shot."

This is about more than diversity; the absence of minorities affects journalistic quality. Many white reporters remain skittish about writing about the racial subtexts of criminal justice, education, health care, and housing stories. What's more, they often operate out of their own Rolodexes, crammed

DESPITE THE BLOCKBUSTER 'RACE SERIES,' DAY-TO-DAY COVERAGE STILL SUFFERS

of *NBC Nightly News*. "But the racial issues plaguing this country are things that people experience in their daily lives. Doing stories about racial issues doesn't require that you have the race beat. It's an awareness that should find its way into all reporting."

Even without specialized reporters, many news organizations are approaching race with more depth and sensitivity than in the past. The blockbuster "race series" has become de rigueur among dailies, and often the projects are comprehensive and well-executed. In North Carolina, the *Winston-Salem Journal's* two-month "Dividing Lines" series in 1998 looked at the racial dynamics of the area's schools, churches, social clubs, and courts — as well as at the *Journal* itself, which the paper acknowledged had "one of the least integrated newsrooms in the state."

"It's embarrassing," publisher John Witherspoon admitted in print. "We have the profile of a 1950s company."

But even with the periodic series, many journalists and readers agree that day-to-day coverage still suffers. Minorities make up only 11.5 percent of newsroom staffers, and blacks constitute 5.4 percent, well below their 13 percent share of the population. (See "Blacks in the Newsroom," *CJR*, May/June 1998.)

with the names of white experts. Stories about African Americans and Hispanics are frequently simplistic studies of poverty and pathology. And reporters overlook minority sources when writing stories about non-racial topics. While much of this has been discussed for years, it's striking how the problems persist.

"As far as the newspaper's concerned, I'm Mexican one day a year: Cinco de Mayo," says Luz Maria Frias, chief legal officer for Centro Legal, a nonprofit community law office in St. Paul. Frias did a thirty-day audit of her city's paper, the *Pioneer Press*, and concluded that the paper tends to treat minority residents as colorful outsiders. "When they have people of color in their pictures, it's normally associated with a cultural celebration. Aside from that, they're not ordinary people who stand in line for Christmas shopping, or enjoy low prices at the gas station."

Hit with a growing consciousness that non-Anglos are poorly represented in their news pages, some papers have hired "diversity" reporters, charged with finding stories in ethnic communities that would otherwise go unreported. One of the most ambitious efforts continues to evolve at the *San Jose Mercury News*, once dubbed "Sans Jose Mercury News" for the lack of ethnic faces in its newspapers. In 1992 the paper created a team called a "change

REPORTING

pod" to deal with the influx of Asian and Latino immigrants who were transforming Silicon Valley. "It was an explicit recognition by the paper that it hadn't gotten the job done," says Stephen Buel, who headed the team for several years.

The team started with five reporters and an editor, and the initial coverage focused largely on positive articles about previously ignored groups. "We

News staff writers Edwin Garcia and Ben Stocking wrote a two-part series about a second wave of migration of Mexicans and Central Americans — this time, from California to the American Southeast and Midwest. "For these West Coast refugees, fed up with the state's high cost of living, urban crime, and anti-immigration climate," they wrote, "the Golden State has lost its glow."

WITH MANAGEMENT'S SUPPORT, A RACE BEAT CAN OPEN UP WORLDS

tended to do a lot of celebratory stories, which were probably an overreaction to the criticism we had gotten in the past," says Ken McLaughlin, who covers the valley's Vietnamese population for the *Mercury News*. "It would have been hard to go into these communities that you've ignored all these years and cover race relations, because you get the attitude that, 'You guys are only coming in and covering things where there's trouble.'"

McLaughlin says those early months improved the newspaper's standing among its Asian and Hispanic readers, who came to trust the beat reporters and knew whom to call when there were events or issues the paper wasn't covering. The creation of the change pod also laid the groundwork for the next stage of the *Mercury News's* campaign: a move toward coverage of the serious and often difficult issues faced by San Jose's minorities. "It was a natural evolution," McLaughlin says.

Indeed, it was part of an evolution among many large and mid-sized papers: once it became routine to include non-whites in daily coverage, it was time to take a bigger step, to delve into the ways people interact across racial lines. In San Jose, the "change pod" began to explore both conflict and cooperation among ethnic groups; it later changed its name to the race and demographics team to reflect that shift in philosophy. Many of the team members spoke the native languages of the groups they were covering, including Korean, Vietnamese and Spanish.

Some of the stories have been remarkable. Last August, *Mercury*

Garcia and Stocking fanned out across North America, from the Mexican state of Michoacán to small towns in Nebraska and North Carolina, to report on the effects of this Latino diaspora. They described the economic upturn in Lexington, Nebraska, where immigrants are moving out of mobile homes and opening businesses. And they profiled an innovative program in Dalton, Georgia, where civic leaders recruited bilingual teachers and sent local ones to Mexico to learn Spanish and study the culture.

But they also wrote about exploitative conditions in meat and poultry plants with predominantly Latino workforces. They documented the strain on the public health system in Siler City, North Carolina. And they reported a spread in anti-immigrant hysteria to the American heartland, taking readers to a rally in Alabama where a Mexican flag was burned. "People are beginning to resist all across the country," anti-immigrant activist Glenn Spencer warned. "It's going to be damn ugly."

Garcia says the series, a four-month effort, is an example of the type of journalism that comes from hiring reporters who specialize in race. Steeped in the subject matter, both reporters were able to research the series without taking out time to learn the basics of Hispanic culture. They also came into the project sensitive to cultural differences. For example, Garcia, the son of Mexican and Costa Rican parents, knew it's often difficult to interview a Latina woman whose spouse hasn't been consulted

first. "I learned a long time ago that to get a better interview with the woman, it's important to go to the husband first and interview him, even if I won't use a word he says," he explains.

And, of course, Garcia and Stocking speak Spanish. In a city like San Jose, where many minority residents speak languages other than English, it's essential to have reporters who can communicate with their sources. But those reporters don't have to share a common ethnic extraction. McLaughlin, who is Irish and Italian-American, speaks Vietnamese, for example. Besides, many of the best race reporters don't cover single ethnic groups; they cover the relations between various groups. Some of the best race reporters, like Newhouse's Tilove, are white.

At the *Mercury News*, the plethora of team-generated, page-one stories has encouraged other staffers, including bureau reporters and feature writers, to write about race and ethnicity. "Creation of the team here has fostered a paper-wide understanding that this was an issue the paper was concerned about," says Buel, the former head of the change pod. "You give stories play, and other people want to do those stories."

But some newspapers have experienced the opposite effect: the beat has given reporters an excuse to abdicate their responsibilities, particularly at newspapers that don't share the *Mercury News's* aggressive commitment. Says Scott Maxwell, who helped coordinate the *Winston-Salem Journal* series and now writes for the *Orlando Sentinel*: "When my colleagues here get calls, I see them pointing their sources to the race reporter. I know, because I'm guilty of it too." As a result, some articles never get written. That abdication can happen at an institutional level as well, Maxwell adds: "You can walk around with your chest puffed out and say, 'Here's our dedication to race. We have a minority affairs reporter.'"

There are other problems. Buel notes that under his leadership, the *Mercury News's* race team did a good job of covering minorities, but a poorer job of covering conservative whites. "There's a certain kind of person who's motivated to want to be on a race-and-demographics team, especially when the team is set up with the assumption that we are going to cover people we have historically uncovered," he says. "The

impulse of those reporters is to build people up. You're not going to attract people who like to confront the enemy and learn more about them."

Buel says the team's creation was an important step toward correcting the problems of the "Sans Jose" days. But he adds, "I wonder if a race-and-demographics team is kind of like the Articles of Confederation. You need to have it, but it's not the long-term solution."

With no consensus, many organizations have chosen to forgo the specialized beats entirely. They're still relatively rare in the broadcast industry; one notable exception is National Public Radio, which recently hired veteran reporter Phillip Martin to cover race-relations and ethnic conflict. Some large newspapers have also chosen not to hire race reporters. And the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* is not alone in disbanding the beat. Last year, after the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* reassigned its beat reporter, Pat Burson, to another job, it decided to leave her old position unfilled.

"Obviously, race is a huge topic that we have to cover well," says Dave Peters, senior editor of the city edition.

"The easiest thing to do is to hire one person and say, 'Your job is to cover race relations in Minnesota.' When Pat was that person, she got good stories. But race relations are such an integral part of so many other things we cover that you're absolving the staff of having to do those stories."

But is that really a problem inherent to race beats? Truth is, reporters who shy away from racial issues are symptoms of a greater problem: newspapers and broadcast organizations that are themselves uncomfortable with the topic. The San Jose experience has shown that, when management supports aggressive coverage of inter-ethnic relations, reporters will clamor to cover race. If they're not clamoring, it indicates passivity on the part of the leadership — or even hostility. "If upper management says, 'This is frosting on the cake, but we still want it to be a vanilla cake, that sends a strong message,'" says Frias, the St. Paul attorney.

The real solution is to devote more

energy to the issue — by hiring additional race reporters and creating a sense of collective responsibility in the newsroom. As reporters like Tilove demonstrate, to cover a complex issue like race — and to cover it right — requires journalists with expertise in the current trends and theories. In that way, it's no different from education or the environment, issues where beat coverage is universally accepted. On the other hand, general assignment reporters who know nothing about air pollution or schools — or race relations — and who avoid the issue in their daily coverage will consistently produce inadequate journalism.

A growing national awareness of the complexities of race gives newspapers, television, and radio outlets an opportunity to sharpen their journalism, to report on the nuances of everyday life in a more accurate and penetrating way. A race beat combined with management support can open up worlds to readers and viewers. A lone reporter, sent out to cover to Cinco de Mayo and Kwanzaa under the guise of race reporting, will produce little more than embarrassment. ■

The Pulitzer Prize couldn't have found a better home than New York's hometown paper.

Congratulations to Michael Goodwin, Editorial Page Editor, and the New York Daily News Editorial Board for winning the prestigious 1999 Pulitzer Prize for Editorial Writing. That makes three Pulitzer Prizes for the Daily News in the last four years.



The New York Daily News Editorial Board: Brian Kates, Alex Storozyński, Karen Hunter, Michael Goodwin, Karen Zautyk, Jonathan Capehart and Michael Aronson.

DAILY NEWS

The Most New York You Can Get

HANDLING CORRECTIONS

Senior news people assess journalists' performance in dealing with boners, boo-boos, blunders, and bloopers

A COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW SURVEY IN CONJUNCTION WITH PUBLIC AGENDA

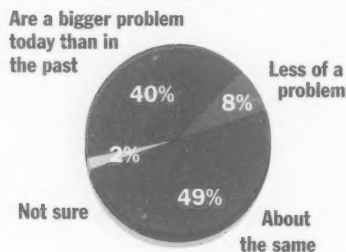
BY NEIL HICKEY

In a 1690 prospectus for America's first newspaper, *Publick Occurrences*, editor Benjamin Harris promised that in his publication, "... nothing shall be entered, but what we have reason to believe is true And when there appears any material mistake in anything that is collected, it shall be corrected in the next."

Ever since, journalists have wrestled with the problem of how to deal with mistakes that creep into their reports. How prominently should errors be acknowledged, and how expeditiously? What mechanisms should be in place to assure that inaccuracies are scrupulously corrected? What clear, standard operating procedures work best?

To find out how journalists around the country feel about mistakes, misuses, misprints, miscalculations, and missteps, the *Columbia Journalism Review*, with the nonprofit, nonpartisan

Do you think news reports that contain factual mistakes:



research firm Public Agenda, polled 125 senior journalists nationwide. Confidentiality was assured, but four out of ten of the sample offered brief, for-attribution elaborations of their views.

Neil Hickey is CJR's editor at large.

A few of the findings are troubling. Examples:

- Fully 70 percent of the respondents feel that most news organizations do a "poor" (20 percent) or "fair" (50 percent) job of informing the public about errors in their reporting. Barely a quarter call it "good." A paltry 2 percent award a rating of "excellent."

- A remarkable 91 percent (the heaviest majority for any question asked in this or previous CJR polls) think that newsrooms need more open and candid internal discussion of editorial mistakes and what to do about them.

- Almost four in ten feel sure that many factual errors are never corrected because reporters and editors are eager to hide their mistakes.

- More than half think that most news organizations lack proper internal guidelines for making corrections.

HONEST MISTAKES, OR MISCHIEF?

Broadcast news is the "most susceptible" medium for letting inaccuracies creep into reporting, according to our respondents. Well over a third call TV/radio news the worst offenders.

Next come newspapers (18 percent) and cable news (14 percent).

News magazines, on the other hand rate better. Not a single respondent declared them most prone to error.

How come? Well, probably because those weeklies have longer deadlines than dailies or electronic media, and because they employ full-time researchers who also serve as fact-checkers.

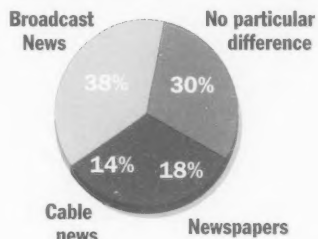
Are erring news reports a bigger problem today than in years gone by? A sizeable 40 percent think they are, but half say it's about the same as it's always been.

A majority of the respondents (52 percent) think that the news media need

to give corrections more prominent display. Thirty-four percent think they're getting about the right amount.

Most (64 percent) say that at their news organizations, reporters are obliged to let their bosses know if a member of the public lodges a plea for a correc-

In your view, which — if any — of the following media are most susceptible to making mistakes in their reporting?



tion. Surprisingly, more than a third leave it up to the reporter's own judgment to decide whether to pass the demand up the line.

But errors are not always a reporter's fault. Fifty-two percent agreed that many mistakes are due to things not under a reporter's control, such as poor editing or misleading headlines.

More than half (58 percent) of the newsrooms represented in the poll have a specific person designated to review and assess requests for corrections. But 40 percent of the respondents said they do not have such a staff member.

Regrettably, in the last fourteen months, a number of intentionally fallacious and fictionalized reports have famously found their way into print — from Mike Barnicle and Patricia Smith of *The Boston Globe* to Stephen Glass of *The New Republic*, *Harper's*, *Rolling Stone*, and other publications. But nobody denies

NOTE: PERCENTAGES FOR ALL CHARTS MAY NOT EQUAL 100% BECAUSE OF MULTIPLE RESPONSES OR ROUNDING. SURVEY RESULTS BASED ON RESEARCH BY CJR AND PUBLIC AGENDA.

MORRIS GEL

that most editorial whoppers in print, broadcast, and cable are honest ones, and not the result of calculated mischief or roguery by staffers. Still, when we asked: "Have you ever seriously suspected a colleague of manufacturing a quote or an incident?" a disturbingly high 38 percent answered yes. Reassuringly, 57 percent said no.

"DECriminalize" THE OFFENSE

A number of our respondents sent along copies of their printed guidelines for handling corrections. At *The Roanoke Times*, for example, the paper's Professional Standards and Policies for News Employees states unambiguously: "We correct all mistakes. Whenever a possible error is called to our attention, a staff member should handle the matter in as courteous a manner as possible and immediately apprise an editor." The correction or clarification is published "as soon as possible." It should be "clear and concise, and should not repeat the erroneous information." On the masthead of each issue, the *Times* informs readers that it corrects errors, and provides the newsroom telephone number.

Jerry Ceppos, former executive editor of the *San Jose Mercury News* (who recently became Knight Ridder's vice president of news), volunteered: "You've hit on a subject that I've thought a lot about." The key to corrections policy, he believes, is "decriminalizing" the offense. At the *Mer-*

Does your organization have a specific office or person responsible for reviewing, assessing, and responding to demands for corrections?



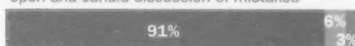
cury News, he told employees that the paper doesn't run enough corrections, even though he suspects that it publishes more of them than all but a few newspapers. Even a few years ago, he thinks, journalists would not, publicly, have made such a big deal out of invented stories and fictional quotes. "My guess is that the offenders would have been allowed to walk away

quietly. We are beyond that time, and it's a great thing for journalism."

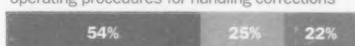
At *The Miami Herald*, the routine is first to verify that an error has indeed been made, then prepare a correction, plus an internal memo on how it happened. To ensure that the error isn't perpetuated, the paper corrects the library version of the offending story.

It's a "fireable offense" at *The Kansas City Star*, according to vice president and

The newsroom culture needs to allow for more open and candid discussion of mistakes



Too many news organizations lack clear standard operating procedures for handling corrections



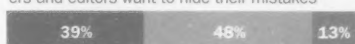
News organizations need to give more prominent play to corrections and clarifications



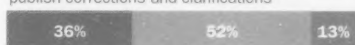
Many mistakes are the result of poor editing or misleading headlines



Too many errors go uncorrected because reporters and editors want to hide their mistakes



Today's news organizations are too reluctant to publish corrections and clarifications



Legend: Agree (dark gray), Disagree (medium gray), Not sure (light gray)

editor Mark Zieman, for a staff member to conceal from his bosses a legitimate request for a correction. Charles Zobell, managing editor of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, says that whenever a reporter is responsible for an inaccuracy, a note is placed in his/her file for discussion during annual performance evaluation. Mark Bowden, managing editor of *The Gazette* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa) says that at his paper, an editor or reporter who commits a mistake must give a written explanation to the managing editor. An apology goes to the complainant if the error is personal.

Page two is the location of choice for corrections among many newspapers responding to the survey. Will E. Corbin, vice president and editor of the *Daily Press*, Newport News, Virginia, says that "without reservation" that's where his corrections go, in a "standard, reader-friendly format." For "really egregious" boners, the redress gets "bigger, more prominent play." At *The Plain Dealer* in Cleveland, according to former editor David Hall, corrections run as near as possible to where they were made, and

indexed on page 2. If the error was on page one, says *The Augusta Chronicle's* executive editor Dennis Sodomka, that's where the correction goes.

Among TV and radio folk, the righting of miscues customarily means acknowledging the mistake immediately, during the same program, or the earliest possible succeeding one. Says Colleen Reynolds, news director, WJBC-AM (Bloomington, Illinois): "The retraction or clarification is run at the same time of day as the erroneous story, and with the same frequency as the original." At another station, errors are reviewed by management, and the correction is aired on three consecutive newscasts.

PLUS ÇA CHANGE...

More than 300 years have elapsed since *Publick Occurrences* announced its determination to correct all its published mistakes. The paper lasted only one issue before being suppressed by Puritan clergy in Boston for an allegedly scandalous, and perhaps erroneous, story.

Seven months ago, the American Society of Newspaper Editors issued a report titled "Why Newspaper Credibility Has Been Dropping." What ASNE called "Major Finding #1" was that "the public sees too many factual errors...in newspapers." Many readers allow that miscues can occur in the rush to meet deadlines, but others attribute them to "sloppiness, carelessness, laziness," and to the fact that "journalists just don't know any better."

Well, things have changed a little since 1690. ■

ABOUT THE CJR POLL

These findings report the views of 125 editors and news directors from print and broadcast media who responded to a questionnaire sent by fax on March 12. Responses received through March 18 were tabulated.

The *Columbia Journalism Review* drew the names from membership lists of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the American Society of Magazine Editors, the Radio-Television News Directors Association, the Associated Press Managing Editors, and the National Association of Black Journalists. This survey is based upon a non-random, self-selected sample. The results represent the views of those who chose to respond to the survey; they are not generalizable to the journalist population as a whole. To access these findings online, visit www.cjr.org, or www.publicagenda.org.

HANDLING CORRECTIONS

Senior news people assess journalists' performance in dealing with boners, boo-boos, blunders, and bloopers

A COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW SURVEY IN CONJUNCTION WITH PUBLIC AGENDA

BY NEIL HICKEY

In a 1690 prospectus for America's first newspaper, *Publick Occurrences*, editor Benjamin Harris promised that in his publication, "... nothing shall be entered, but what we have reason to believe is true And when there appears any material mistake in anything that is collected, it shall be corrected in the next."

Ever since, journalists have wrestled with the problem of how to deal with mistakes that creep into their reports. How prominently should errors be acknowledged, and how expeditiously? What mechanisms should be in place to assure that inaccuracies are scrupulously corrected? What clear, standard operating procedures work best?

To find out how journalists around the country feel about mistakes, misuses, misprints, miscalculations, and missteps, the *Columbia Journalism Review*, with the nonprofit, nonpartisan

Do you think news reports that contain factual mistakes:

Are a bigger problem today than in the past



research firm Public Agenda, polled 125 senior journalists nationwide. Confidentiality was assured, but four out of ten of the sample offered brief, for-attribution elaborations of their views.

Neil Hickey is CJR's editor at large.

A few of the findings are troubling. Examples:

- Fully 70 percent of the respondents feel that most news organizations do a "poor" (20 percent) or "fair" (50 percent) job of informing the public about errors in their reporting. Barely a quarter call it "good." A paltry 2 percent award a rating of "excellent."
- A remarkable 91 percent (the heaviest majority for any question asked in this or previous CJR polls) think that newsrooms need more open and candid internal discussion of editorial mistakes and what to do about them.
- Almost four in ten feel sure that many factual errors are never corrected because reporters and editors are eager to hide their mistakes.
- More than half think that most news organizations lack proper internal guidelines for making corrections.

HONEST MISTAKES, OR MISCHIEF?

Broadcast news is the "most susceptible" medium for letting inaccuracies creep into reporting, according to our respondents. Well over a third call TV/radio news the worst offenders.

Next come newspapers (18 percent) and cable news (14 percent).

Newsmagazines, on the other hand rate better. Not a single respondent declared them most prone to error.

How come? Well, probably because those weeklies have longer deadlines than dailies or electronic media, and because they employ full-time researchers who also serve as fact-checkers.

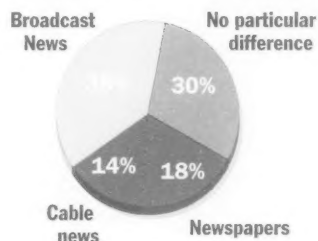
Are erring news reports a bigger problem today than in years gone by? A sizeable 40 percent think they are, but half say it's about the same as it's always been.

A majority of the respondents (52 percent) think that the news media need

to give corrections more prominent display. Thirty-four percent think they're getting about the right amount.

Most (64 percent) say that at their news organizations, reporters are obliged to let their bosses know if a member of the public lodges a plea for a correc-

In your view, which — if any — of the following media are most susceptible to making mistakes in their reporting?



tion. Surprisingly, more than a third leave it up to the reporter's own judgment to decide whether to pass the demand up the line.

But errors are not always a reporter's fault. Fifty-two percent agreed that many mistakes are due to things not under a reporter's control, such as poor editing or misleading headlines.

More than half (58 percent) of the newsrooms represented in the poll have a specific person designated to review and assess requests for corrections. But 40 percent of the respondents said they do not have such a staff member.

Regrettably, in the last fourteen months, a number of intentionally fallacious and fictionalized reports have famously found their way into print — from Mike Barnicle and Patricia Smith of *The Boston Globe* to Stephen Glass of *The New Republic*, *Harper's*, *Rolling Stone*, and other publications. But nobody denies

NOTE: PERCENTAGES FOR ALL CHARTS MAY NOT EQUAL 100% BECAUSE OF MULTIPLE RESPONSES OR ROUNDING. SURVEY RESULTS BASED ON RESEARCH BY CJR AND PUBLIC AGENDA.

that most editorial whoppers in print, broadcast, and cable are honest ones, and not the result of calculated mischief or roguery by staffers. Still, when we asked: "Have you ever seriously suspected a colleague of manufacturing a quote or an incident?" a disturbingly high 38 percent answered yes. Reassuringly, 57 percent said no.

"DECriminalize" THE OFFENSE

A number of our respondents sent along copies of their printed guidelines for handling corrections. At *The Roanoke Times*, for example, the paper's Professional Standards and Policies for News Employees states unambiguously: "We correct all mistakes. Whenever a possible error is called to our attention, a staff member should handle the matter in as courteous a manner as possible and immediately apprise an editor." The correction or clarification is published "as soon as possible." It should be "clear and concise, and should not repeat the erroneous information." On the masthead of each issue, the *Times* informs readers that it corrects errors, and provides the newsroom telephone number.

Jerry Ceppos, former executive editor of the *San Jose Mercury News* (who recently became Knight Ridder's vice president of news), volunteered: "You've hit on a subject that I've thought a lot about." The key to corrections policy, he believes, is "decriminalizing" the offense. At the *Mer-*

Does your organization have a specific office or person responsible for reviewing, assessing, and responding to demands for corrections?



cury News, he told employees that the paper doesn't run enough corrections, even though he suspects that it publishes more of them than all but a few newspapers. Even a few years ago, he thinks, journalists would not, publicly, have made such a big deal out of invented stories and fictional quotes. "My guess is that the offenders would have been allowed to walk away

quietly. We are beyond that time, and it's a great thing for journalism."

At *The Miami Herald*, the routine is first to verify that an error has indeed been made, then prepare a correction, plus an internal memo on how it happened. To ensure that the error isn't perpetuated, the paper corrects the library version of the offending story.

It's a "fireable offense" at *The Kansas City Star*, according to vice president and

The newsroom culture needs to allow for more open and candid discussion of mistakes



Too many news organizations lack clear standard operating procedures for handling corrections



News organizations need to give more prominent play to corrections and clarifications



Many mistakes are the result of poor editing or misleading headlines



Too many errors go uncorrected because reporters and editors want to hide their mistakes



Today's news organizations are too reluctant to publish corrections and clarifications



■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Not sure

editor Mark Zieman, for a staff member to conceal from his bosses a legitimate request for a correction. Charles Zobel, managing editor of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, says that whenever a reporter is responsible for an inaccuracy, a note is placed in his/her file for discussion during annual performance evaluation. Mark Bowden, managing editor of *The Gazette* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa) says that at his paper, an editor or reporter who commits a mistake must give a written explanation to the managing editor. An apology goes to the complainant if the error is personal.

Page two is the location of choice for corrections among many newspapers responding to the survey. Will E. Corbin, vice president and editor of the *Daily Press*, Newport News, Virginia, says that "without reservation" that's where his corrections go, in a "standard, reader-friendly format." For "really egregious" boners, the redress gets "bigger, more prominent play." At *The Plain Dealer* in Cleveland, according to former editor David Hall, corrections run as near as possible to where they were made, and

indexed on page 2. If the error was on page one, says *The Augusta Chronicle's* executive editor Dennis Sodomka, that's where the correction goes.

Among TV and radio folk, the righting of miscues customarily means acknowledging the mistake immediately, during the same program, or the earliest possible succeeding one. Says Colleen Reynolds, news director, WJBC-AM (Bloomington, Illinois): "The retraction or clarification is run at the same time of day as the erroneous story, and with the same frequency as the original." At another station, errors are reviewed by management, and the correction is aired on three consecutive newscasts.

PLUS ÇA CHANGE...

More than 300 years have elapsed since *Publick Occurrences* announced its determination to correct all its published mistakes. The paper lasted only one issue before being suppressed by Puritan clergy in Boston for an allegedly scandalous, and perhaps erroneous, story.

Seven months ago, the American Society of Newspaper Editors issued a report titled "Why Newspaper Credibility Has Been Dropping." What ASNE called "Major Finding #1" was that "the public sees too many factual errors...in newspapers." Many readers allow that miscues can occur in the rush to meet deadlines, but others attribute them to "sloppiness, carelessness, laziness," and to the fact that "journalists just don't know any better."

Well, things have changed a little since 1690. ■

ABOUT THE CJR POLL

These findings report the views of 125 editors and news directors from print and broadcast media who responded to a questionnaire sent by fax on March 12. Responses received through March 18 were tabulated.

The *Columbia Journalism Review* drew the names from membership lists of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the American Society of Magazine Editors, the Radio-Television News Directors Association, the Associated Press Managing Editors, and the National Association of Black Journalists. This survey is based upon a non-random, self-selected sample. The results represent the views of those who chose to respond to the survey; they are not generalizable to the journalist population as a whole. To access these findings online, visit www.cjr.org, or www.publicagenda.org.

A Babel of Broadcasts

The U.S. is propagandizing the world with a jumble of wasteful, redundant radio and TV programs — Voice of America, Radio Free This-and-That. But is the world getting the message?

BY MARK HOPKINS

NATO's warplanes had hardly dropped their first bombs on Serbia on March 24 than America's tax-funded international radio and television services started blanketing the Balkans with their own news and analyses of the conflict. Within two weeks, the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty had combined information programs to broadcast twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week in five Balkan languages to give the U.S. view of the rapidly developing NATO war with Yugoslavia.

A NATO C-130 plane loaded with transmitters started flying along the Hungarian/Serbian border to beam news programs in Serbo-Croatian to Serbian listeners below. Worldnet, the congressionally-funded, satellite-delivered international television system, also distributed statements by President Clinton and other U.S. officials explaining and justifying the NATO campaign to viewers in Yugoslavia. A State Department task force, meanwhile, began organizing a "ring around Serbia": radio transmitters in Rumania, Bosnia, and Croatia to broadcast into Yugoslavia, supplanting Yugoslav stations that once carried American and West European programs that were silenced by the Milosevic government.

The swift response of American international radio and television services to the Kosovo crisis shows just how closely they are tied to U.S. foreign policy.

Mark Hopkins is former VOA bureau chief in Belgrade, Beijing, Moscow, and London. Earlier, he spent ten years on the Milwaukee Journal.

Nearly sixty years ago, VOA first went on the air with a 1942 wartime pledge in German: "The news may be good. The news may be bad. We shall tell you the truth." The news is still good and bad. The difference now is that VOA's one-time purpose to report objective news is



Refugees from Kosovo listening to a Voice of America broadcast

being replaced by congressionally-favored political programming with clear ideological agendas.

Given the growth of "freedom" radios sponsored by Congress, U.S. taxpayers are supporting not just one Voice of America, but seven additional special interest radio and television services that broadcast information and opinion to tens of millions of people around the world (see chart). This elaborate, unique, jerry-built structure has become an architectural monstrosity. White House and congressional tinkers have attached a wing here, a porch there, a shaky cupola on top, and some dormers jutting from the roof. None of it hangs together. Congressionally-sponsored international broadcasting stands as an example of ignorance, lack of purpose and vision, and egregious wastefulness on the part of its managers. Salient facts:

■ After creating Voice of America, the

White House and Congress went on to start various "freedom" broadcast services, the so-called "surrogates": Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty (beaming to communist Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, respectively), Radio Free Asia, Radio Free Iraq, Radio Free Iran, Radio Marti and Marti TV (to Cuba) and Radio Democracy Africa — plus Worldnet, the TV service that broadcasts a daily block of American news and discussions of U.S. political developments.

■ These services transmit nearly 2,000 hours a week in sixty-one languages. No one knows how much money is wasted because of duplication. It surely is in the millions of dollars. Almost half of the languages beamed by the Voice of America—the one-time flagship of U.S. foreign broadcasting — also emit from younger services like

Radio Free Asia. VOA and RFA, for example, both transmit news in Burmese, Laotian and Korean; and to China in Mandarin, Cantonese, and Tibetan. VOA and RFE/RL both report in Croatian, Serbian, Albanian, Czech, and Rumanian; and, to the former Soviet Union, in Russian, Ukrainian, Armenian, and Uzbek. Both also broadcast in Arabic and Farsi (to Iran).

■ Nobody knows how many people are listening. VOA says surveys show 65 million, but that the figure could be 86 million. RFE/RL may have 20 million listeners. The common definition of a "listener": Any person who tunes in one or more times a week. The standard profile of a foreign listener is an urban male in his forties or fifties with an interest in international issues. That eliminates hundreds of millions of workers and peasants, and most women in the world.

■ Nobody knows if the nearly \$400 million being spent annually by Congress on broadcasting has any effect on foreign listeners. Audience research in many countries is unreliable or impossible to collect. Are Serb, Arab, Chinese, or Russian listeners more understanding of an outside (read American) point of view, or are existing biases against the U.S. simply refueled by broadcasts? Even if U.S. lawmakers took the trouble to monitor what is being broadcast—and they do not—they still wouldn't know if programs serve U.S. "strategic interests," as congressional law requires.

American global broadcasting employs about 3,500 people, including journalists, translators, engineers, and administrators working around the world. No other system, including the admired, British government-funded BBC World Service, encompasses such a conglomeration of overseas services in so many languages, with so many directors, paid in so many ways and administered for such a stew of political goals and missions. And with so few proven results.

Some recent history: As the cold war faded, some senior foreign policy officials like Brent Scowcroft and Lawrence Eagleburger said U.S. international broadcasts had served their purpose and should be silenced. President Clinton on taking office in 1993 agreed that at least RFE/RL should be shut down. But Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty successfully fought back, drawing on longtime support in Congress and parading favorable testimony from such impeccable cold war dissident figures as Czech President Vaclav Havel. RFE/RL, taking huge budget and staff cuts, shifted headquarters from Munich to Prague (at Havel's invitation). Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty rewrote its job description to justify congressional grants, offering itself as a model of western journalism, an alternative news source, and insurance against resurgent government censorship abroad. Nothing symbolizes the shift so much as the fact that RFE/RL, once the "free voice in exile" in Germany, now operates openly behind onetime communist enemy lines, and has bureaus and

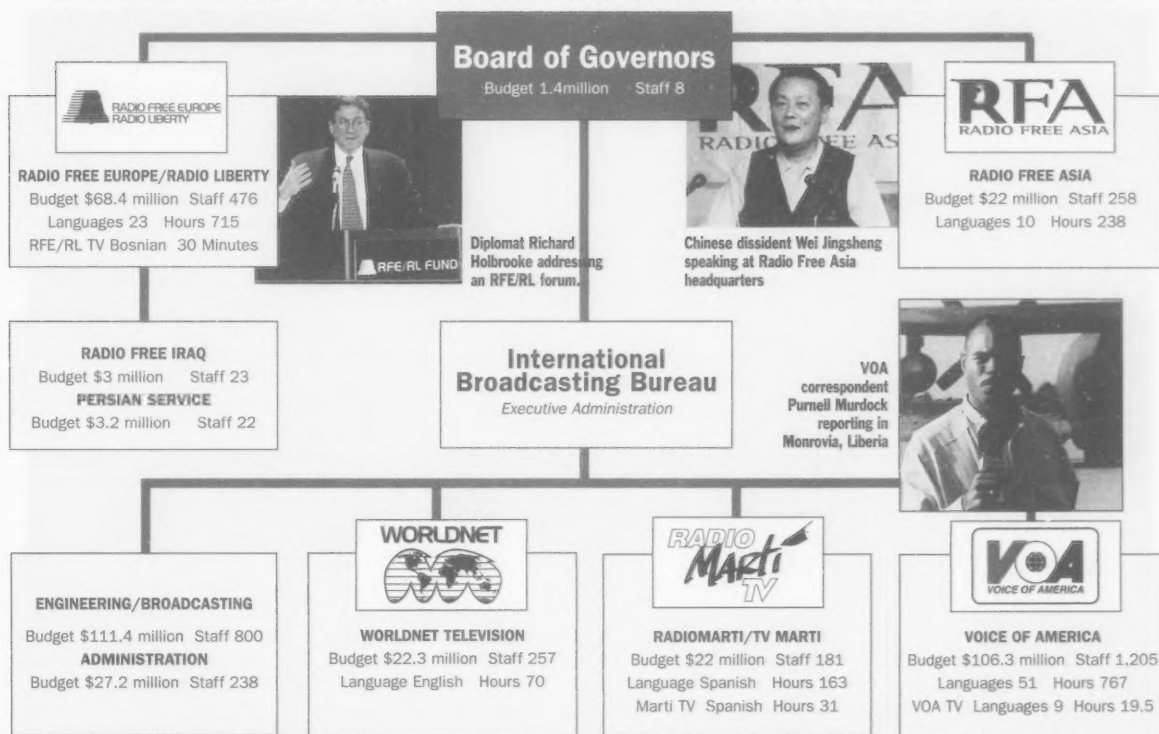
stringers in all former Eastern European countries and the former Soviet republics.

New enemies and causes also emerged as targets of U.S. foreign radio and television: Saddam Hussein and the Kuwait war, Slobodan Milosevic and ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, North Korea and nuclear weapons, China and dissidents, Russia and democracy-building, not to mention world-wide terrorism, tribal genocide, mass starvation, and, of course, save the children.

As a result, U.S. international broadcasting stock abruptly soared in the mid-1990s. In a significant decision last fall, Congress reorganized an existing board of governors. Beginning October 1, the board's nine members, including the secretary of state, will oversee all U.S. global radio and television programming. The board will report to the president and Congress as a semi-autonomous federal entity—a sort of Amtrak for international broadcasting.

This (yet another) reorganization does not resolve a basic problem. Previ-

A SOUND STRUCTURE? OR AN "ARCHITECTURAL MONSTROSITY?"



Source: Board of Governors Notes: 1. "Hours" are total weekly radio or television broadcasts 2. Budgets are fiscal year 1999, ending September 30

POLICY

ous managers of U.S. broadcasting never have had a clear idea of its role or purpose since the cold war waned. The new board is no exception. Only one member has journalism experience. None has worked in global broadcasting. The board is split among those who favor one or another of the broadcast services, and who espouse different

vo crisis finds it "appalling" because of biased and uncritical reporting.

As "freedom" radios multiply, U.S. international broadcast managers have come to expect results. They are no longer content simply to convey factual news, whatever its impact, as they were when Congress approved a Voice of America Charter in 1976 dictating that foreign broadcasts

A ONE-STOP 'RADIO/TV AMERICA' COULD SAVE \$50 MILLION A YEAR

roles for broadcasting. The disparate opinion is mirrored in Congress. John Lennon, acting director of Worldnet, says, "One theme of Congress and others is that resources should support the oppressed in the world through radio and maybe television. So you have Radio Free Iraq, Radio Marti, Radio Democracy for Africa, Radio Free This or That."

The board ostensibly acts as a firewall, protecting editors and reporters from government or congressional censorship. But, in a glaring contradiction, Congress says the board must assure that U.S. broadcasters serve clear foreign policy purposes. Says the board's latest annual report: "Our broadcasts promote democracy, encourage trade and investment, educate about health, expose human rights abuses and set an example of the power of a free press for the world."

A resulting bias in programming is obvious. Brookings Institution Asian scholar Catharin Dalpino says, "I do think Radio Free Asia is propagandistic. It focuses on dissidents who articulate western values and democracy." RFE/RL broadcasting to the Balkans has been heavily skewed toward defense of the NATO bombing campaign. There has been much news of the plight of refugees and President Clinton's insistence that NATO would prevail. Very little information has been conveyed about disagreements among the NATO members or criticism of the air campaign for causing civilian casualties.

VOA's coverage of the Balkans tends to depend on official U.S. sources. There is no VOA correspondent in Belgrade. One VOA language service chief says, "We all know that you can find facts to make a truth. As a government broadcaster, you can't be neutral." A VOA staffer involved in coverage of the Koso-

vo crisis finds it "appalling" because of biased and uncritical reporting. As "freedom" radios multiply, U.S. international broadcast managers have come to expect results. They are no longer content simply to convey factual news, whatever its impact, as they were when Congress approved a Voice of America Charter in 1976 dictating that foreign broadcasts should first of all be objective, but also reflect U.S. foreign policy. Present day U.S. broadcasting directors, with encouragement from Congress, go beyond the charter. They believe they have missions to influence the way foreigners think, live, and are governed. RFE/RL president Thomas Dine says the goal is to "foster democracy, promote free market reforms." A former senior VOA official talks about the need to get information to "societies that, if not despotic, live under repressive regimes." The board of governors and Congress reject the notion of a single, say, Radio America whose aim would be simply to tell the truth, period, with no ideological agenda.

When the proposal for a Radio Free Asia surfaced in 1991, in reaction to the Chinese assault on Tiananmen Square two years earlier, Voice of America officials suggested that Congress should simply add \$10 million to the VOA budget to expand its existing Mandarin service to China. Backers of Radio Free Asia, including Senator Jesse Helms and author Bette Bao Lord, objected. They insisted on a new, separate, and politically aggressive China radio service because VOA is regarded by them and many in Congress as a bland government mouthpiece. Radio Free Asia programming, while factually accurate, gives special place to Chinese dissident news and internal strife in China. Dan Southerland, a former *Washington Post* Beijing correspondent who now heads RFA programming, says, "We feel our mandate is to give voice to people who have no voice."

Last year, when the Clinton administration resisted a congressionally proposed Radio Free Iran — as the White House tried to woo Iranian moderates — Senators Trent Lott and Jesse Helms

and congressmen Bob Livingston and Benjamin Gilman wrote to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright insisting that Radio Free Iran be entirely divorced from VOA. They wanted hard-hitting broadcasts to Iran. The result was the Persian Service, originally called Radio Free Iran. Along with the new Radio Free Iraq, it began broadcasting from Prague last October under the administration of RFE/RL. The new services repeat existing VOA programming in Arabic to Iraq and in Farsi to Iran, programming that costs roughly \$135,000 an hour for editorial production alone.

Thus, politics pervades American global broadcasting. It was politically expedient, for example, for Congress and the White House to approve \$7 million to move Radio/TV Marti from well equipped quarters in Washington to new studios in Miami, heartland of the anti-Castro Cuban émigré community. The money was approved just a few months before the 1996 presidential election in which the Florida Hispanic vote was eagerly sought. The Cuban service has long been mired in émigré politics. Independent journalists, the state department's inspector general, and individual members of Congress all have criticized the service as biased, with few radio listeners in Cuba and virtually no TV viewers. Nonetheless, Congress continues to give Radio/TV Marti \$22 million a year.

The handful of senators and representatives who decide budgets for the jumble of American broadcast services knows almost nothing about professional international programming and journalism. They tend to think simplistically that U.S. broadcasts of otherwise unavailable news and information poisons authoritarian regimes and fertilizes the intellectual, if not revolutionary, soil so that western democratic ideals and free markets will blossom. In fact, there is no more than anecdotal evidence to show that American or other foreign broadcasts have ever substantially changed attitudes of radio listeners or television viewers.

Congress has ordered a review of programs with an eye to reducing or eliminating duplicated language services to save money. It will be an uphill fight. Once established with congressional financing, no American tax-funded foreign broadcasting service has ever been shut down, largely because each has its advocates in Congress or the White House.

The U.S. foreign broadcasters battle

each other for congressional funds in continuing internecine warfare. Paul Goble, RFE/RL director of communications, says in a cutting criticism of Voice of America, "We have independence and credibility because we do not broadcast the U.S. government's positions. VOA does that."

This kind of sniping is built into a system that pits services against one another as each contends for territory and money. Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, for example, were established in the 1950s to broadcast to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Beginning in 1994, however, RFE/RL's newly created South Slavic service, set up with congressional approval, expanded its range to the Balkans. The service competes directly with VOA Albanian, Croatian and Serbian broadcasts.

As the "surrogates" have gained influence in Congress, VOA's role as America's premier overseas broadcaster has declined. RFE/RL, Radio Free Asia, and the others, combined, now get more money for news programming than VOA — \$119 million versus \$106 million. (The rest of the nearly \$400 million annual budget supports layers of sometimes redundant administrations and costly shared engineering and broadcast facilities.) One reason is that Voice of America has never had an effective lobby in Congress. RFE/RL, along with other "freedom" radios, has always skillfully cultivated key congressional staffers, convincing them and their senators and representatives that the "surrogates" are more effective in carrying out U.S. policy objectives than the staid, bureaucratic Voice of America.

Another reason for VOA's diminished stature is that once hungry VOA audiences in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union have fallen drastically during the last ten years, as those regions developed western-style journalism. VOA, now unsure of its status and with constantly changing directors (their average tenure in the past decade is less than two years), is struggling to adjust to a post-Soviet world. For years VOA fought being labeled the government's propaganda machine. But the board of governors now describes VOA as the "official" government voice. Further, Congress requires broadcast of VOA-written and state department-approved editorials. While shutting down bureaus in Europe, VOA has focused increasingly on third world audiences — in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. About 20 percent of VOA's world-wide listenership is now in Nigeria alone.

As VOA becomes submerged in a larger network of U.S. broadcasters, losing its pride of place and becoming associated with openly politically oriented radio and television services, a onetime concept of a single American international broadcaster to compete head on with the BBC World Service has virtually died. For self-serving reasons, all the broadcast services argue against merging the twenty-seven language services that are now duplicated, let alone creating a single Radio/TV America. That could save about \$50 million a year. But RFA director Richard Richter contends that "diversity" best serves foreign audiences. Kevin Klose, former director of RFE/RL and now head of National Public Radio, says, "You can't tailor a radio service to one-size-fits all." Key members of Congress agree. Among the few experts who speak out for a consolidated American service is former VOA director Geoffrey Cowan. He says, "To the extent there is a fight for scarce resources, it is better to spend it all on Voice of America, one radio, one system, with a reputation for reliability and credibility." And in answer to those who argued that the United States already has an international television network in CNN, Cowan used to respond, "Yes, but most people in the world do not speak English and most do not live in five-star hotels."

While all the services squabble over money, they are failing to keep up with rapid revolution in international communication. The Internet and digital transmission by satellite will make obsolete the old short-wave broadcast system, with its expensive and cumbersome relay transmitter stations around the world. Board of governors chairman Marc Nathanson, head of Falcon Cable TV, says bluntly, "The technology of short-wave is outmoded. We need to get into modern technology. Congress needs to fund it as we go to satellites, the Internet, and FM broadcasting." Congress, however, is providing only a small fraction of the tens of millions of dollars needed to modernize the U.S. broadcasting/engineering network.

VOA and RFE/RL are beginning to put news and opinion programs on Web sites. A listener with access to a computer and the Internet in China or Serbia or Russia can now download radio broadcasts in real time. As technology advances, American and other foreign global broadcasters, such as the BBC and Germany's Deutsche Welle, will

reach select audiences of academics, students, and government officials with television and radio broadcasts chiefly through the Internet and/or satellite digital transmissions to ground receivers. International communications on these channels will be less expensive, faster, and more difficult to jam. They portend a communications nightmare for governments that attempt to censor outside information, and a dream world for people in search of other views and opinions.

Few question that a superpower like the United States should have a global radio and television broadcasting system, one that surpasses the BBC World Service as a source of reliable, factual, and dispassionate information. The present jerry-built U.S. system, riven with politics and waste, is too easily used for propaganda purposes. The United States should not be regarded as a propagandist, but rather as an advocate of a free and open press, of a marketplace of ideas. A single Radio/TV America, amalgamating all the existing U.S. services into a U.S. international public broadcasting system, would serve those tested and admirable principles that underlie the best of American journalism. ■

CJR INTERNSHIPS

Applications are now being accepted for the fall program. Interns will work closely with editors on a wide range of research, writing, and production projects.

Interns may be enrolled concurrently in a college or university; they may also be unaffiliated. Positions are both part and full time.

Applicants should send a resume, writing sample, two references, and a letter explaining their interest to:

Gloria Cooper, Managing Editor
Columbia Journalism Review
Journalism Building
Columbia University
New York, NY 10027

THE CJR



A RAUCOUS CENTURY OF COVERING POLITICS

BY JAMES BOYLAN

As the millennium draws closer, here's the latest in CJR's series on journalism in the 1900s — chronicling how presidents, pundits, politicians, polemicists, and publishers experienced history's most event-packed hundred years. From Mencken, Pegler, Lippmann, and Dorothy Thompson to Kempton, Pearson, Reston, and Meg Greenfield, it was an era that spawned the most vivid, colorful, bounteous, scandalous, and downright mesmerizing coverage of office-holders, office-seekers, and their minions that the country has yet seen.

In the summer of 1924, H.L. Mencken of the Baltimore Sunpapers sat in sweltering Madison Square Garden in New York through a memorable exercise in futility — the seventeen days and 193 ballots of the Democratic National Convention. Mencken relished it all: "There is something about a national convention that makes it as fascinating as a revival or a hanging. It is vulgar, it is ugly, it is stupid, it is tedious, it is hard upon both the higher cerebral centers and the *gluteus maximus*, and yet it is somehow charming. One sits through long sessions wishing all the delegates and alternates were dead and in hell — and then suddenly there comes a show so gaudy and hilarious, so melodramatic and obscene, so unimaginably exhilarating and preposterous that one lives a gorgeous year in an hour."

James Boylan is professor emeritus, University of Massachusetts, and was founding editor of CJR.



Mencken's tribute is a backhanded expression of the whole affinity of American journalism and American politics, its triumph, tragedy, farce, idealism, corruption, ennui, and November surprises. In short, politics has been the best and longest-running story of the century, and perhaps any century. In the decades just past, it inspired such stylists as Murray Kempton, such over-the-top polemicists as Westbrook Pegler, Jr., such wits as Russell Baker, such muckraking reporters as Paul Y. Anderson and the celebrated team of Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein. Even at its everyday best, American political journalism maintained a robustness and skepticism that carried it through the most dull and enervating times.

Yet the century closes in a mood of doubt. Startled by a year of presidential scandal, veteran practitioners display concern that political coverage is now dominated by entertainment and permeated with the mean-spiritedness and personalization of politics in the 1990s. Moreover, they worry that economic and competitive pressures are infringing on their obligation to write the truth as they see it. Still, the record of the century shows that they have recovered from far worse times.

A hundred years ago, the political reporter was a hired hand, paid to write what the newspaper owner wanted. Much of the more enterprising journalism was appearing in magazines.

William Randolph Hearst's *Cosmopolitan* in 1906 made the case for popular election of senators in David Graham Phillips's strident series, "The Treason of the Senate." *Collier's Weekly* exposed the mishandling of public lands in the Taft administration. And Lincoln Steffens laid bare urban politics in his *McClure's* series, "The Shame of the Cities." Two new political journals enriched the field: the brilliantly illustrated *Masses*, founded in 1911, spoke for Greenwich Village radicalism until the Wilson administration suppressed it during the Great War. The weekly *New Republic*, based in Washington, became a kind of house organ for Woodrow Wilson, and Wilson even hired its bright young man, Walter Lippmann, to work on peace plans.

By the 1920s, a few Washington correspondents were transforming themselves into syndicated columnists and spreading insider reporting and opinions across the land. As early as 1916, the *New York Evening Post* distributed the dour David Lawrence; Mark Sullivan and Frank R. Kent followed. A gossipy book, *The Washington Merry-Go-Round* (1928), led the authors, Drew Pearson and Robert S. Allen, to a regular column of that name, which became the country's most widely read political feature. (When its founders died years later, their protege, Jack Anderson, carried it on vigorously.)

Franklin D. Roosevelt was a hit with the working press. On March 8, 1933, four days in office, he held his first press conference. Seated behind his desk, puffing on a cigarette through a long ivory holder, he shook hands with each of nearly two hundred reporters. Junking the stuffiness of his predecessors, he announced that questions no longer would have to be submitted in writing in advance; he would answer whatever they chose to ask. At the same time, he made clear that he would dictate whether and how the correspondents could use his responses, thus cannily maintaining control. The relationship eventually frayed — during World War II he pinned a Nazi Iron Cross on the isolationist columnist John O'Donnell. But in twelve-plus years, FDR met the press 998 times. (In six-plus years, Bill Clinton has conducted 171 solo and joint press conferences.)

The New Deal helped to foster reporters' political independence. Largely friendly to Roosevelt, they increasingly resisted editors' efforts to steer their coverage. Moreover, their new union, the American Newspaper Guild, created in 1933 after a call to arms by the columnist Heywood Broun, provided assistance by defending reporters' integrity and ethics as well as

their economic well-being. In Washington, the guild gained status through such leaders as the tough and feminist Doris Fleeson, then writing for the *New York Daily News*.

Most newspaper owners — whom Interior Secretary Harold L. Ickes called "America's House of Lords" — increasingly distrusted, then detested what they saw as Roosevelt's radicalism. Hearst, a Democrat who had supported FDR in 1932, turned against him. The old habits of partisan journalism re-emerged — notoriously at the *Chicago Tribune*, headed by Roosevelt-hater-in-chief, Colonel Robert R. McCormick. Newspaper endorsements ran roughly 3 to 1 against Roosevelt in his victorious campaigns of 1936, 1940, and 1944.

Democratic candidates through John F. Kennedy did no better. Only a small band of major papers regularly supported Democrats — the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, J. David Stern's *Philadelphia Record* and *New York Post*, and, starting in 1941, the innovative but short-lived *New York daily PM*, founded by Marshall Field III and Ralph Ingersoll. Ultimately, as newspapers increasingly became public corporations rather than personal fiefdoms, most declared themselves independent; in 1964 Lyndon Johnson became the first Democrat in the century to receive overwhelming editorial support.

In the 1930s and 1940s, there emerged a breed of statesmen-journalists (later known by the Hindi term "pundit," meaning "scholar") whose occupation was to tell those in power how to run the country. Lippmann was the earliest and most influential. He started his syndicated column, "Today and Tomorrow," for the *New York Herald Tribune* in 1931, and wrote it for the next thirty-five years. Both liberals and conservatives condemned him as too moderate. In the end, he left Lyndon Johnson's Washington in 1967, under fire because he dared to say that the war in Vietnam would fail.

Where Lippmann played the oracle, James Reston of *The New York Times* was cut from the reporter model; he "worked the Town . . . the way a bee works a garden, ferrying ideas and gossip from Foggy Bottom to Capital Hill, from Embassy Row to the White House," according to a protégé, Max Frankel. Suave and understated, Scotty (he was a Scottish immigrant) won his spurs in 1944 with exclusives on the United Nations planning conference in Washington. As a reporter and columnist, he



Dorothy Thompson: a pioneer newswoman



Fred Friendly and Edward R. Murrow helped sink McCarthy

THE CENTURY

became "the most admired newspaperman of the day, the last to achieve true celebrity in print, before the Age of Anchors," wrote Frankel. So much was he part of the Washington machinery, though, that on occasion he took the government's side, notably in urging the *Times* to minimize its stories before the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion in Cuba. But when the *Times* had the opportunity in 1971 to make the most defiant gesture of its history by publishing the secret Pentagon Papers, he gave an unambiguous go-ahead.

A crowd of all-purpose experts emerged by 1940. Joseph W. Alsop, who initially reached the inner circles because he was a cousin of Eleanor Roosevelt, was one of the foremost. Working with his brother Stewart, Joe played on such grand themes as the rectitude of the American role in the world. His career lasted through the Vietnam war, of which he was a vehement supporter. Other bylines became equally familiar: Raymond Clapper, Marquis Childs, Roscoe Drummond. Radio produced its own cohort — Boake Carter, H.V. Kaltenborn (voice of the Munich crisis), and the strident Fulton Lewis, Jr. Flamboyant Dorothy Thompson was prominent in both radio and print.

Some journalists had always prided themselves on being able to read the entrails of a campaign and predict the outcome. (Leo Egan of *The New York Times* was one of the last and best.) But in 1948, the polls got it wrong, and reporters and pundits were even worse, even predicting who would be in Thomas E. Dewey's cabinet. After Harry Truman won decisively, Reston sternly lectured himself and his colleagues: Each reporter, he wrote, "was carried away by facts he did not verify, by theories he did

not fully examine, and by assumptions he did not or could not check."

Although many politicians of the postwar era made hay by stirring fears of communism, none matched the junior senator from Wisconsin, Joseph R. McCarthy. He posed as a master investigator and became the virtuoso of the instant headline — MCCARTHY NAMES LATTIMORE TOP RUSSIAN AGENT. In covering him, news organizations, particularly the wire services, were handcuffed by their own objectivity: What the senator said, they reported — true or not.

But others found ways to oppose him. Henry R. Luce's *Time* magazine, *The Washington Post* (whose cartoonist, Herblock, portrayed McCarthy as a thug), Drew Pearson, and the commentator Elmer Davis, among others, assailed him. The famous Edward R. Murrow-Fred Friendly exposé on CBS in 1954 is often recalled as having caused McCarthy's downfall. But there were other factors — live television broadcasts of the Army-McCarthy hearings; the 1954 congressional election, which removed McCarthy from his committee chairmanship; and, later, a senate censure. Yet the press fretted for years afterward that it had been McCarthy's accomplice in too willingly purveying the senator's wild accusations, thus damaging reputations and spreading fear.

In the 1950s and 1960s, television swiftly became a major political medium. Politicians adapted their platform style to fit the cameras. John F. Kennedy in 1961 brought the presidential news conference onto live TV for the first time — a step that many predicted he would regret. But he proved to be an artist of the form. JFK was also the only postwar president who matched FDR's virtuosity in handling journalists. He maintained close friendships with some of them, such as Ben Bradlee of *The Washington Post*. At the end, it was the sad duty of a handful of those who had known him well — Merriman Smith of UPI, Jack Bell of AP, Tom Wicker of *The New York Times*, and others — to report from Dallas on the day of his murder.

Kennedy was the last president whose personal failings went largely unreported. Lyndon Johnson was not so lucky. Although he had been an admired legislative leader, reporters disliked his rough, often overbearing presidential style.



JFK launched live TV news conferences

Many of them came to distrust his Vietnam policies. Johnson lost heart when Walter Cronkite, abandoning his objective anchor role, returned from Vietnam in 1968 and urged a negotiated withdrawal.

The 1968 conventions were the last gasp of such old-fashioned political organizations as the Daley machine in Chicago. By 1972, party leaders were yielding the choice of candidates to the primaries — and thus inevitably to the reporters covering the campaign, the gang that Timothy Crouse memorably tagged "The Boys on the Bus." They practiced a new style of campaign reporting, subordinating issues in favor of "inside baseball." Stories emphasized campaign techniques, political professionals, polls, the "horse race." Theodore White's *The Making of the President, 1960* and its sequels got credit and blame for this trend, not entirely deservedly.

Before the 1970s, Washington had no great muckraking tradition. The most notable exposé between the wars — the uncovering by Paul Y. Anderson of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* of the Teapot Dome scandal — was all but unique. Two junior city-side reporters at *The Washington Post*, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, improvised reporting techniques to uncover the criminality behind a break-in at the Democrats' Watergate headquarters in 1972. The journalism establishment expressed its admiration grudgingly in a 1973 Pulitzer award to their paper that somehow could not find a way to mention their names.

By the mid-1970s, new agendas were redefining New Deal political alignments. A surge of conservatism first found its voice in the *National Review*, founded by William F. Buckley, Jr., in 1955. On the left, I.F. Stone's *Weekly* served for nearly twenty years as Washington's voice of dissent; after Stone retired, there was no real replacement, although the muckraking



Carl Bernstein (left), and Bob Woodward

Mother Jones, the feminist *Ms.*, and the far-flung alternative press sought to fill the gap.

The new wave of feminist and minority activists found mainstream journalism wanting. Women were confined to restricted roles,

symbolized by their confinement to the balcony of the National Press Club. Slowly they won their way. Helen Thomas of UPI, whose experience dated back to the era of FDR, ultimately became the dean of the White House press corps. Mary McGrory's 1974 Watergate commentaries earned the first Pulitzer Prize given a woman covering national politics. Meg Greenfield, who died this May, became the lead editorial voice of *The Washington Post*. In television, one pioneer, Pauline Frederick, went on camera for ABC at the 1948 conventions, but women became truly visible politically in Washington with the arrival in the 1960s of, among others, Nancy Dickerson on CBS and NBC and Marlene Sanders on ABC. Progress was speeded when a number of Washington's women journalists joined in discrimination lawsuits filed against employers in the early 1970s. Eventually the boys on the bus became, often, the girls.

African Americans and other minorities moved ahead more slowly, especially in a capital that remained segregated until mid-century. In 1948, I.F. Stone was rebuffed when he tried to take an African American (a distinguished judge) to lunch at the National Press Club. Starting in the 1970s, minority professional organizations — the National Association of Black Journalists, as well as Hispanic, Asian-American, and Native American associations — agitated for expanded opportunity. Not many minority journalists became highly visible in political journalism. Some of the exceptions: columnists Carl T. Rowan, Earl

Caldwell, Roger Wilkins at *The New York Times*, and, more recently, E.R. Shipp of the *New York Daily News*.

Television spawned the journalist-as-celebrity. Barbara Walters provided the benchmark with her million-a-year contract with ABC in 1976. TV journalists are usually better known than the politicians they cover. On the campaign trail, a crowd will ignore a candidate to collect an autograph from, say, Sam Donaldson or even Robert Novak. Celebrities and would-be celebrities also tended to make of politics a show staged by journalists. The maestros of cable news, and the spouters of talk radio, have infused political discussion programs with attitude and point of view, with discussion replaced by sound bites and shouting.

Politics and political journalism both became bigger and more expensive in 1980s and 1990s. Journalists had outnumbered delegates at political conventions since 1916, but in 1996 an astonishing 15,000 accreditees swamped the national conventions and found, essentially, nothing to report — just the renomination of a president at one and no contest at the other.

New outlets for political information proliferated. Ted Turner's CNN initiated twenty-four-hour news in 1980; later, NBC and

Rupert Murdoch's Fox Network emulated CNN. By the mid-1980s, you could open your front door as early as 6 A.M. and find three national newspapers: *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and Gannett's *USA Today*. All this even before the country went online in the mid-1990s and the Internet provided a bewildering flood of political information, opinion, argument, and propaganda.

William Jefferson Clinton offered the most inviting target since Senator Gary Hart had to answer for adultery in 1987. Jeff Gerth of *The New York Times* tried to open a new Watergate by exposing the Whitewater real-estate transactions. But Whitewater trailed off in complexity

and ambiguity, and it was left to Michael Isikoff of *Newsweek* to become Clinton's Woodstein. In February 1998, after Isikoff unleashed on an unwitting nation Monica, Linda Tripp, Lucianne Goldberg, and Kenneth Starr, the rest of the mainstream press shucked its clothes and jumped in the pool. As in Teapot Dome and Watergate, journalists became allies of prosecutors; the independent counsel, the White House, and reporters played the mutually rewarding game of anonymous leaks. In the end, what could have been a political story unique in the country's history — the removal of a sitting president — ended in anticlimax.

Afterward, Washington veterans, concerned about the glitz and gossip that accompanied the scandal, lent their names to various plans aimed at reforming the profession. Some signed up with the newfangled "civic journalism," designed to heal the breach between political journalism and the public it is supposed to serve. Others, including such political stalwarts as Jules Witcover, Ben Bradlee, and Jeff Greenfield, and such stars as Carl Bernstein, David Halberstam, and Dan Rather, enlisted with the Committee of Concerned Journalists, a group committed to speaking out against press malpractice. This may be a promising new turn as journalists look to preserving their independence and conscience.

But can journalism's great love affair with politics go on? Poor voter turnouts and poor ratings have signaled a decline in public attention. Television has backed off full coverage of those gaudy political festivals, the national conventions. (Ted Koppel walked out of the 1996 Republican convention, complaining there was no news to report.) Myriad other concerns — entertainment, consumerism, sports, gossip — dilute public attention, and politics often seems to have little significant to offer. Journalists may take heart from the words of Russell Baker. When told in 1974 that the astonishing had become so commonplace that nothing could possibly be outrageous any more, he responded: "Something so unspeakable will eventually happen in Washington that it will strike us as outrageous." Politics, he and Mencken imply, is not only the art of the possible, but the possibility of the unspeakable, and it is all but certain that the next century will offer its share. ■



UPI's Helen Thomas, dean of the White House press corps, has covered D.C. politics since FDR

CANADA**TORONTO'S BLOODY NEWSPAPER WARS**

Canada's new daily *National Post* has sparked a costly, acrimonious, and curiously old-fashioned newspaper war in Toronto, involving all four papers published there — *The Globe and Mail* (the other national daily), *The Toronto Star*, and even the tabloid *Toronto Sun*. Losses are mounting at the *Post*, battles rage elsewhere, but the war seems far from over. The only winners so far are the readers, who are being swamped with piles of free and cut-rate newspapers, and the advertisers, who are enjoying deep discounts.

The October startup of the *Post* was arguably the biggest national launch in North America since *USA Today*, and as expected, the main struggle is between the *Post* and the *Globe*. But the *Star*, and to a lesser extent the *Sun*, have been drawn into the fray. The proprietors of the four combatants have Canadian roots, but are also major players in the United States — Hollinger, Thomson, Torstar (primarily through its money-spinning Harlequin Enterprises romance publishing empire), and Quebecor.

"This war is being fought on editorial, advertising, circulation, promotions, you name it," says John Honderich, publisher of the *Star*, the paper with the biggest circulation (463,000 daily) in Canada. He acknowledges that the *Star* is a target of both national papers because it claims to attract three times as many upper income readers as the *Globe*.

At stake is newspaper dominance in the lucrative southern Ontario market and with it immense political clout and prestige. Also at stake are the giant egos of the proprietors. Toronto is home turf

to international publishing tycoons Conrad Black of the *Post*, and the *Globe's* Ken Thomson — Lord Thomson of Fleet. Black, 54, has long coveted a



major presence in Toronto, and with the *Post* he has achieved this goal, but his strategy may still include eventual purchase of the *Globe*.

Lord Thomson, 75, lives quietly in Toronto and hasn't set foot in the House of Lords in years. His father, the press baron who was born in Cabbagetown, then the poorest part of Toronto, considered *The Globe and Mail* to be his greatest prize. The son is unlikely to concede to the well-born Black, who lives in London but remains a devoted Torontonians in spirit.

The plot has thickened considerably with the emergence of the *Sun's* Pierre Karl Peladeau, 37, as the new crown prince of Canadian publishing. The *Sun* is the jewel in Peladeau's newly acquired

Sun Media chain. Now there is the specter of a possible separatist from Montreal ensconced in the heart of English Canada. Ambitious, outspoken and cunning, he has pushed his older brother aside, and slashed jobs at the *Sun* the day he took over in March. Peladeau is c.e.o. of Quebecor, founded by his separatist father, who died in 1997. Quebecor publishes the French-language tabloids *Le Journal de Montreal* and *Le Journal de Quebec*, and is the second largest commercial printer in the United States.

Quietly seething is John Honderich, the publisher of the *Star*, who is overshadowed by the other proprietors. He is the son of former *Star* publisher Beland Honderich, who rose to ownership from the position of finance editor. The *Star* is vulnerable because it is the only newspaper without a national presence, a clear disadvantage in attracting national advertising.

The new *Post* is clearly Conrad Black's very special baby: he constantly badgers the staff by phone, and is relentlessly pursuing the *Globe* with the same juiced-up editorial and price-cutting business tactics he used at Britain's *Telegraph* to dominate the *Times* of London. The *Post* is generally conceded to be a good read, and well presented with lots of color. A lot of people like it even more because they are getting it free or delivered for as little as \$4 a month, though Black warns this may soon come to an end.

Black has said he is prepared to spend \$102 million over five years to cover expected losses at the *Post*. In its first five months it lost \$32 million in operating and startup costs. Black is particularly concerned about advertising revenues. The advertising to news ratio is about 20 to 80; management had hoped it to be near 30 to 70 at this point. Circulation of the Monday to Saturday paper was about 276,000 on average, ahead of schedule, compared with the *Globe's* claim of 330,000. Both papers continue to give away large numbers of copies.

The *Post's* losses are chump change to Black's Hollinger International Inc. Black controls 403 newspapers, including the Chicago *Sun-Times* and *The*

Jerusalem Post. His worldwide empire is third in total circulation after News Corp. and Gannett. His papers in Canada account for over 40 percent of the country's total circulation.

Ken Thomson has immense wealth to beat back Black. Thomson Corporation's newspaper holdings accounted for less than 18 percent of its \$1.34 billion revenue in this year's first quarter. The Thomson newspapers reported operating profits of \$34 million, unchanged from the first quarter of 1998. His sixty-eight newspapers in North America (including the *Winnipeg Free Press* and the *Connecticut Post*) rank ninth in total daily circulation (about 1.9 million).

The *Star* and the *Globe* have spent lavishly since the *Post* began publishing, trying to contain costs while at the same time increase market share. The Toronto newspaper scene has been revitalized by the competition, but there is considerable tension within both the editorial and business sides of all four papers. Even the downscale *Sun*, the only tabloid and the least affected, had fired its editor-in chief when Quebecor took over in March. "It was time for a change," explained Sun Media president Paul Godfrey.

The editorial turmoil is most severe at the panic-stricken *Globe*, where employees say they were first ordered to "dumb down" their paper because management had been told it was attractive only to gray-haired men in suits. This curious response to the more brightly written longer stories in the *Post* failed, and recently the *Globe* has reverted to longer stories and become less insistent on the use of anecdotal leads.

The *Globe* has hired consultants, increased sports coverage, fired staff, and taken to running slanted stories about the performance of its competitors. The publishers of the *Post* and *Sun*, and president of the *Globe* have even engaged in ill-tempered debate on television, while the *Star's* publisher is prone to sullen silence and the occasional press release to set the record straight.

The outcome of all this? Probably a smaller-than-anticipated *Post*, a still profitable *Globe*, a less-swaggering *Star*, and a smug *Sun*, which so far is managing to hold on to its weekday circulation of 248,000 and mainly local advertising base.

— Don Townson

Townson, a Vancouver-based free-lance journalist, has worked for the Toronto *Star* and The *Globe* and Mail.

FOLLOW-UP

MAGAZINE CEASE-FIRE

Canada and the U.S. Shake Hands

Canadians were liable to spill their morning coffee as they glanced at the headlines of their two national newspapers one day in May. SPLIT-RUN MAGAZINES: THE INEVITABLE SURRENDER, lamented the editorial page of the *National Post*. "They are giving our lunch to the Americans and they're proposing to give us welfare," exclaimed a sub-head in *The Globe and Mail*.

The panic was prompted by the news that Canada had finally settled its nearly thirty-five-year war with the United States over split-runs — Canadian editions of U.S. magazines. Facing a full-scale trade war with its largest trading partner (the two countries swap an estimated \$365 billion a year in goods and services), Canada was forced to soften many of the measures that have protected its \$400 million magazine advertising pie from American competition.

Less than two months earlier, Canada had passed the Foreign Publishers Advertising Act, which made it illegal for Canadian advertisers to buy space in foreign publications, and levied fines of up to \$165,000 for each infraction. With foreign (mostly American) magazines accounting for 50 percent of Canadian magazine subscriptions — and 80 percent of newsstand sales — Canada had sought to protect its industry, and its culture, by limiting the access of foreign publishers to Canadian advertisers.

The initial dispute over split-runs erupted in 1993, days after Time Inc.'s *Sports Illustrated* introduced its Canadian edition. Canada established a task force on its magazine industry. The result was legislation that levied an 80 percent tax on Canadian firms' ads in foreign magazines. *Sports Illustrated Canada* suspended publication indefinitely.

With the new deal, foreign publishers like Time Inc. will be able to sell 12 percent of the advertising pages in their split-run editions to Canadian advertisers (rising to 18 percent in two years). In

addition, American and other foreign magazine publishers, following a one year phase-in period, will be able to hold a majority ownership stake in Canadian start-ups and spin-offs; previously, non-Canadian ownership was limited to 25 percent. And for the first time since the trade war began, Canadian advertisers who buy space in split-runs will be able to claim tax deductions. Previously, these deductions were available only for advertisements in Canadian magazines.

"The United States got everything it wanted," says François de Gaspé Beaubien, president of the publications division of Telemedia and spokesman for the Canadian Magazine Publishers Association. "This agreement will deliver a devastating blow to our industry in Canada." Beaubien and other Canadian publishers have always contended that American publishers — thanks to their U.S. circulation and advertising revenues — can offer both well-subsidized editorial material to Canadian readers and tremendously low rates to Canadian advertisers. Lacking such resources, Canadian publishers say they will be unable to compete. U.S. publishers have always disputed this claim, contending instead that their entry into the market would only increase the amount Canadian advertisers spend on all magazines (see "Magazine Trade Wars," *CJR* January/February 1999).

But will Canadian publishers really face competition for ad dollars from U.S. magazines — including some that offer special Canadian editorial material? "We have several titles that could be launched as soon as this deal is implemented," says Hearst Magazines International president George J. Green, who cites as likely candidates Canadian editions of *Cosmopolitan* and *Good Housekeeping*. Both rank among the top thirty magazines sold in Canada. Beaubien, who publishes the women's *Elle Québec* and *Homemaker's*, is convinced that the women's service market is most vulnerable to split-runs, as they all rely on the same narrow pool of advertisers. "This," he says, "will be a free-for-all manna from heaven for U.S. publishers."

And how does the publication that started the whole brouhaha feel about re-establishing a Canadian edition? "We are reviewing whether it is still a business that would be worth engaging in," says *Sports Illustrated* publisher Fabio Freyre. "A decision is pending."

— Nicholas Stein

Stein is *CJR's* assistant editor.

As you may know, The Miami Herald won a Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting. This is the story that made them a Pulitzer finalist for local breaking news, as well:

When the news broke that 12-year-old Jorge Cabrera had been electrocuted in a county bus shelter, the official line was: probably a lightning strike.

Miami Herald reporter Curtis Morgan, arriving at the scene, knew something much worse was going on when he saw the crowd of electricians, police and bureaucrats. Inkings in his initial interviews pointed not to an act of God, but to acts of negligence.

AN ACT OF GOD OR AN ACT OF NEGLIGENCE?

UNCOVERING THE TRAGIC TRUTH MADE THE MIAMI HERALD A PULITZER FINALIST.

Reporter Joe Tanfani rushed to county hall to begin reviewing the county's records. By that evening, The Herald had made the deadly connection: The boy died because of horribly botched electrical wiring. The bus shelter had been turned

into a high-voltage death trap. And the errors weren't caught because the county had shredded its inspection system.

Each day that week, writing on deadline pressure, The Herald's reporters broke new ground. They revealed that an inspector had signed off on the shelter. They reported that connections had been jury-rigged by an unlicensed employee who had flunked electrical tests. And they showed how a state law, pushed by the building industry, had contributed to the tragedy.

The stories produced quick results. Police launched a homicide investigation. The county shut down power to all the company's bus shelters. And building regulators restored a system of painstaking inspections.

We commend
The Miami Herald and its
reporters for what their
efforts accomplished for the
safety and well-being of the
community.

Knight Ridder. What a difference a newspaper can make.



KNIGHT RIDDER

We're local,
coast to coast,
in newspapers.

- The Philadelphia Inquirer
- Detroit Free Press
- The Miami Herald & el Nuevo Herald
- San Jose Mercury News
- The Kansas City Star
- The Charlotte Observer
- Fort Worth Star-Telegram
- Saint Paul Pioneer Press
- Contra Costa Newspapers
- Philadelphia Daily News

- Akron Beacon Journal
- The [Columbia, S.C.] State
- Lexington [Ky.] Herald-Leader
- The Wichita [Kan.] Eagle
- The Macon [Ga.] Telegraph
- Tallahassee [Fla.] Democrat
- The [Wilkes-Barre, Pa.] Times-Leader
- Duluth [Minn.] News-Tribune
- Belleville [Ill.] News-Democrat
- Columbus [Ga.] Ledger-Enquirer

- The [Biloxi, Miss.] Sun Herald
- The [Fort Wayne, Ind.] News-Sentinel
- The [Myrtle Beach, S.C.] Sun News
- Bradenton [Fla.] Herald
- Grand Forks [N.D.] Herald
- The [San Luis Obispo, Calif.] Tribune
- The Monterey County [Calif.] Herald
- [State College, Pa.] Centre Daily Times
- Aberdeen [S.D.] American News
- The [Warner Robins, Ga.] Daily Sun

INFORMATION FOR LIFE

...and on the
Real Cities Network.

**REAL
Cities**

www.realcities.com

books

Going Legit

by Piers Brendon

At the heart of this big, bad book is a salvation myth. Moses Annenberg rose from news vendor to press tycoon but he never reached the promised land of respectability: his life was destroyed by a jail sentence for tax evasion in 1940. His only son Walter restored the family fortune by building a vast media empire and rescued the family name by giving billions of dollars to charity. So, implies *Timescribe* Christopher Ogden, personal tragedy was redeemed by philanthropic triumph. The financial resurrection of the son atoned for the fiscal sins of the father.

As this suggests, Ogden's biography of the Annenbergs, an unauthorized work for which he was nevertheless given unique access, is a barely disguised apologia. It is also ill-written, repetitious, and full of sophomoric psychology. On the other hand, it is relentlessly informative. It provides details about everything from Moe's taste in women (his secretary/mistress was on constant call, she solemnly declared, in case anything came up) to Walter's taste in sandwiches (his favorite is mortadella bologna). So the determined reader can tease out much of the truth behind the legend. And most instructive that is.

Son of a penniless, German-Jewish immigrant, Moe learned his trade in the service of William Randolph Hearst during the Chicago circulation wars at the beginning of the century. To break into a marketplace dominated by the *Tribune* and the *Daily News*, Hearst's *American*, known as "The Madhouse on Madison Street," practiced yellow journalism of the most jaundiced type. But to keep the readers thus

LEGACY: A BIOGRAPHY OF MOSES AND WALTER ANNENBERG

BY CHRISTOPHER OGDEN

LITTLE, BROWN

615 PP \$29.95

attracted it also had to obtain subscriptions and to insure deliveries. This involved bloody competition, the destruction of bundles of rival papers, the burning of sales kiosks, and the beating up of dealers.

Soon, Moe, tall, hatchet-faced, and given to bouts of feral rage, was in command of a "little army" of young hoodlums engaging in thuggery which did not stop short of murder. Ogden is coy about whether the pistol-packing Moe was himself a killer. But there is no doubt that Hearst gave the kind of regular paid employment to criminal gangs in Chicago not

Piers Brendon is the author of The Life and Death of the Press Barons. He lives in Cambridge, England.



August 1936: Moe and Walter Annenberg pick out photos for *The Philadelphia Inquirer's* new Sunday magazine. Father wanted actresses in lingerie; son preferred waterfalls and birds.

matched until the rise of bootlegging, and that Moe always remained close to the underworld. As Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau said in 1939, "there's no difference between Annenberg and Capone."

Like many racketeers, though, Moe set up a legitimate business. He took over a newspaper distribution agency in Milwaukee, forged a monopoly, and diversified into other enterprises. By the age of 36, in 1913, he had made his first million. But he kept up his association with Hearst, moving to New York in 1919 to manage the circulation of all his journals. This proved particularly advantageous three years later, when Moe bought *Daily Racing Form*, the gamblers' bible. He forced distributors to take the *Form* if they wanted to sell Hearst's papers.

Moe eliminated the *Form's* competitors by more or less brutal means and acquired a complementary wire service for transmitting up-to-the-minute racing information, mostly to unlawful bookmakers. The nature of this operation became breathtakingly apparent when he was sued by a cheated gangland partner, Jack Lynch. Moe's unblushing defense was that a court of equity had no jurisdiction over the division of spoils in an illegal business. Eventually he bought out Lynch and bought off the mob.

However, not even the purchase of the aged and dignified *Philadelphia Inquirer*, which had fallen on hard times by 1936, could turn Moe into a pillar of society. He ran the paper

W. EUGENE SMITH/BLACK STAR TIME INC. PICTURE COLLECTION

BOOKS

with what a competitor, David Stern, called "a strange amalgam of brilliance and baseness for which Hearst is primarily responsible."

Moe issued high-minded pronouncements about the *Inquirer's* mission to "print the news accurately and fearlessly." He also campaigned against social evils, the high interest rates charged by pawnbrokers, the ban on Sunday fishing, the indiscriminate sale of dangerous fireworks. Yet Moe used the *Inquirer* quite unscrupulously to promote his own interests, boosting friendly politicians while blasting business competitors. And he

raised the circulation by lowering the tone, hiring Emile Gauvreau, first editor of Bernarr Macfadden's *Evening Graphic*, the so-called *Pornographic*. Gauvreau spiced up the *Inquirer's* Sunday magazine with articles on such matters as "The Psychology of the Peeping Tom," "Cannibalism Among Reptiles," and "Night Stranglers of Paris."

This was tame beside the *Inquirer's* assaults on the New Deal. Roosevelt retaliated, telling Morgenthau, "I want Moe Annenberg for dinner." Like Capone, Moe was carved up by the

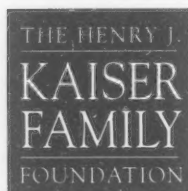
Internal Revenue Service. Ogden seems to acknowledge his guilt since Moe was "such a shrewd and crafty businessman, so relentless in his attention to details involving money." Yet he inconsistently states that Moe had "trusted" an untrained accountant and "never checked to make certain that his tax house was in order." Once inside Lewisburg federal penitentiary Moe raised hell because *The New York Times* was delivered three hours before *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. But imprisonment broke his spirit. A month after his release on parole in 1942, Moe, aged only 65, was dead.

So Walter had to rescue an inheritance crippled by a court-imposed \$9.5 million fine. With his deformed and deaf right ear and his disabling stutter, Walter scarcely seemed to be the stuff of which saviors are made. Surrounded by seven sisters, indulged by his mother and cursed by his father, he was shy, awk-

In the federal penitentiary, Moe raised hell because the *Times* was delivered three hours earlier than the *Inquirer*

ward, formal, and defensive. But though Walter possessed none of Moe's tigerish flamboyance, he had more than his business flair. He combined an eagle eye for the golden opportunity with an iron grip on the spending of cents. He also had a fierce temper, a malicious streak, and a burning desire to vindicate himself. On Moe's death, Walter began to lose his stutter and to find new self-confidence.

In 1944, at the age of 36, he launched *Seventeen*, an immensely successful young women's magazine of such virginal wholesomeness that it banned the word "pimple" from headlines — which did not stop jokers from calling it "The Acne and the Ecstasy." The following year he bought WFIL radio in Philadelphia, as a gateway into television, the potential of which he instinctively recognized. In 1953 he acquired *TV Guide* and turned it into another industry bible. Avoiding controversy and air-brushing out the slightest hint of a nipple, it



Announces THE KAISER MEDIA INTERNSHIPS IN URBAN HEALTH REPORTING FOR 1999

An internship program for young minority journalists interested in specializing in urban public health reporting

The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation is again sponsoring summer internships, starting June 1999, at seven major metropolitan newspapers and at three local television stations, for young minority journalists interested in reporting on urban public health issues. The interns are selected by the newspapers/TV stations.

The ten 1999 Kaiser Media Interns and their host newspapers/TV stations are:

Dalia Dangerfield — KTVU-2, San Francisco-Oakland
Iris Guzman — KDFW-4, Dallas
Connie Ing — The Atlanta Journal-Constitution
Joshua Kwan — The San Jose Mercury News
Marian Liu — The Detroit Free Press
Kimberly McCoy — The Sun-Sentinel, Ft. Lauderdale
DeShong Perry — KTVI-2, St. Louis
Aimee Phan — USA Today
Kristin Vaughan — The Boston Globe
Sylvia Pagan Westphal — The Los Angeles Times

The Kaiser Internship Program provides an initial week-long briefing on urban public health issues and health reporting at the National Press Foundation in Washington, D.C. Interns are then based for ten weeks at their newspaper/TV station, typically under the direction of the Health or Metro Editor/News Director, where they report on health issues. The program ends with a 3-day meeting and site visits in Boston. Interns receive a 12-week stipend and travel expenses. The aim is to provide young journalists or journalism college graduates with an in-depth introduction to and practical experience on the specialist health beat.

To apply for the Year 2000 program, write to:

Penny Duckham
Executive Director of the Kaiser Media Fellowships Program
Kaiser Family Foundation
2400 Sand Hill Road
Menlo Park, CA 94025
e-mail: pduckham@kff.org; website: www.kff.org

The Kaiser Family Foundation is an independent health care foundation and is not affiliated with Kaiser Permanente or Kaiser Industries.

offered readers what the *San Francisco Chronicle's* television critic called "pabulum and prune juice." But it covered the prodigious new medium in more detail and with more enthusiasm than any other newspaper or periodical. And it became the most widely sold weekly ever published, netting \$8 million a year and reaching a peak circulation (in 1978) of 21 million copies.

Walter befriended Reagan and supported Nixon, who appointed him ambassador in London. There, despite making notorious gaffes and being openly ignored by Henry Kissinger, he and his elegant second wife Lee spent their way into popular esteem. In 1988 Rupert Murdoch bought Walter's communications conglomerate for \$3 billion, paying well over the odds and almost bankrupting himself in the process. Meanwhile, Walter has won universal acclaim as America's most generous living philanthropist. His motto is "Live rich, die poor." But, with a net worth of nearly \$6 billion, he earns money so fast he can hardly put the motto into practice.

This is not the whole story. Walter has always professed to be essentially a newspaperman, remarking that without the *Inquirer* he would be "just another rich guy feeding the pigeons." Thus he did not so much redeem his father's reputation as confirm it. Walter commanded his Philadelphia flagship in the old Hearstian spirit, though without his extravagant panache. Ogden acknowledges this. He even quotes the former dean of Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, Edward W. Barrett, who questioned whether Walter ever really understood the principles of "ethical journalism." Yet Ogden constantly softens the indictment.

He deplores Walter's inexplicable and frequently changing blacklist of names (including Ralph Nader and Zsa Zsa Gabor) that had been banished from the *Inquirer*. But he fails to note the extension of what reporters called (though he doesn't) "Annenberg's shit list" to *TV Guide*, which billed Dinah Shore's television program as "Variety Show," omitting the name of its star. He mentions the *Inquirer's* support in the 1960s for Philadelphia's Neanderthal police commissioner Frank Rizzo, who later became mayor; but he does not reveal that Rizzo threatened reporters and had hostile news items killed. Ogden cites other instances

of censorship, distortion, and even corruption on the *Inquirer*, but he does not show fully how the paper contributed to the "intellectual emaciation" (*The New Republic's* phrase) of Philadelphia. Nor does he record that one night city editor took to answering the phone, "Suppression Central here."

The truth is that before selling the *Inquirer* to John S. Knight in 1969, Walter managed it like any other business — ruthlessly. He had little or no conception that the duty of the press in a democracy is to maintain the free flow of information and opinion. He regarded

editors as a "dime a dozen." He refused to pay for reporters, even on important stories like President Kennedy's assassination or the Six Day War, when he could use wire services. Sometimes journalists at the *Inquirer* had to get permission to make long-distance calls.

Ogden celebrates Walter's commercial genius and charitable munificence. But he does not seem to realize that money can't buy redemption. This is particularly so in the case of the Annenbergs: the iniquities of the father, or some of them, have been visited on the son. ■



When you use "Xerox" the way you use "aspirin," we get a headache.

X Boy, what a headache! And all because some of you may be using our name in a generic manner. Which could cause it to lose its trademark status the way the name "aspirin" did years ago. So when you do use our name, please use it as an adjective to identify our products and services, e.g., Xerox copiers. Never as a verb: "to Xerox" in place of "to copy," or as a noun: "Xeroxes" in place of "copies." Thank you. Now, could you excuse us, we've got to lie down for a few minutes.



THE DOCUMENT COMPANY
XEROX

XEROX,® The Document Company,® and the stylized X are trademarks of XEROX CORPORATION, 56 USC 580.

BOOKS

Disastrous Coverage

By Tom Goldstein

"For the most part we do not first see, and then define," wrote Walter Lippmann in 1922 in *Public Opinion*; "we define first and then see." That useful observation of Lippmann (whose last name is, alas, misspelled in *Compassion Fatigue*) is quoted by Susan Moeller in a chapter in which the author appropriately criticizes the media for hyping as terrorist acts events that may not rise to such a label.

Criticism of the press for its foreign coverage is hardly novel, but in this unrelenting, uncompromising book, Moeller, an assistant professor of American Studies at Brandeis University, manages to cast a fresh, unwavering eye on the problem. For Moeller, compassion fatigue has many manifestations. It occurs when journalists believe the public is bored by the straight telling of the news so that instead they focus on sensational news or cover crises by formula, usually through an American-centric

filter. In a world overwhelmed by disaster, Moeller writes, compassion fatigue can set in when (p. 12) "a crisis seems too remote, not sufficiently connected to Americans' lives," similar to the recent coverage of Kosovo.

To analyze the ritualistic mechanics of crisis coverage since 1980, Moeller chooses dozens of exam-

COMPASSION FATIGUE

HOW THE MEDIA SELL DISEASE,
FAMINE, WAR AND DEATH
SUSAN MOELLER
ROUTLEDGE, 390 PAGES
\$27.50

ples, including mad cow disease, Ebola, famines in Ethiopia and Somalia, various assassinations, the discovery of death camps in Bosnia, and genocide in Rwanda. She organizes these case studies around the crises represented by the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: pestilence, famine, death/assassination and war/



PETER TURNLEY/BLACK STAR © 1992

Starving orphan in Somalia, *Newsweek*, 1992

genocide. This organizing principle has its virtues, but occasionally the author's numbing detail works against trenchant analysis. At times, the book lapses into tedious recounting of recent history, such as the description of the career and the presumed 1988 assassination of General Mohammad Zia ul-Haq of Pakistan, which received scant coverage, in part because it came the very day that George Bush was nominated for president.

These flaws fade, though, in the face of important, often original and sometimes stunning observations. For instance, Moeller crisply puts down "parachute" journalism: "As foreign correspondents are chosen less for being regional experts than for being good writers and a quick study, the images they bring back — especially for television — are increasingly generic."

Taking note of our relentlessly visual culture, Moeller notes a disturbing lack of visual literacy, how few of us are aware of "the potential that images offer for manipulation." Photography — the subject of her first book — "can illuminate the shadows, but it can also cast its own. Images can lie outright: They can be published with misleading captions, they

Tom Goldstein is the dean of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.

COVERING CRIMINAL JUSTICE

A Resource Guide

Presented by
The Center on Crime, Communities & Culture
and by the
Columbia Journalism Review

To obtain a copy, e-mail Andrew Martin of the
Center on Crime, Communities & Culture
at amartin@sorosny.org

can be morphed on computers. But they can also be more subtly influenced. The censoring of images — or the denial of access to image making, as occurred during the Persian Gulf war — can skew the public's perception of an event." She then persuasively describes how the taking and the publishing of images is "inherently undemocratic" because there is "an astonishing range of images from which the single one is selected."

Near the end of her exhaustive study, Moeller offers an intriguing explanation of why Americans seem to be touched more by famine in Somalia or Ethiopia than by the genocide of Kurds or Rwandans. "The existence of genocides — and the helplessness of individuals in the face of them," she writes, "wars with basic ideals and values cherished in American society: the emphasis on personal achievement and the belief in social progress. Such concepts remain vital to Americans only because Ameri-

Why are Americans touched more by famine in Somalia or Ethiopia than by genocide of the Kurds or Rwandans?

cans avoid confrontations with certain realities — those realities that suggest that class or race or gender have more impact on one's ability to achieve success than any bootstrap philosophy, and those realities that suggest that the dark and brutal impulses of mankind have not been rooted out by the humanitarian efforts of the late twentieth century."

To combat compassion fatigue, Moeller offers up a series of well-meaning suggestions. Most of her proposed solutions — pay less attention to the bottom line; place foreign correspondents "more judiciously" around the globe — have a wearying familiarity about them. That her suggestions probably will not be acted upon should not diminish the accomplishment of this impressive book. ■

THE CULTURE OF FEAR

WHY AMERICANS ARE AFRAID OF THE WRONG THINGS

BARRY GLASSNER

"We become what we behold. And what we behold in our public media is an America more terrifying than it actually is."

—NEIL POSTMAN, author of *Amusing Ourselves to Death*

"Glassner provides persuasive evidence and thoughtful insights to show why we are so often afraid of the wrong things—and how these misplaced fears undermine attempts to address our real problems."


—DAVID SHAW, Pulitzer Prize-winning media critic for the Los Angeles Times

—KIRKUS

304 pages • \$25.00 cloth

BASIC BOOKS

10 East 53rd Street, New York, NY 10022 To order call: 1-800-386-5656



BOOT CAMP for the GENETIC REVOLUTION

Genes & Cells

An intensive course (Dec. 5 – 10, 1999) in the science you need to know to cover genetic engineering, cloning, genomics, biotechnology, stem cell technology, tissue engineering and other powerful new fields. Taught by the world's leading researchers from MIT, the Whitehead Institute and Harvard University.

Apply by Sept. 1
for fellowships covering
travel, hotel and most
meals.



**Knight
Science Journalism
Fellowships at MIT**

MIT, E32-300, 77 Mass. Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139
<http://web.mit.edu/knight-science/>
 boyce@mit.edu • 617-253-3442

COVERING THE MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE

FROM **THE PLOT TO GET BILL GATES**, BY GARY RIVLIN. TIMES BUSINESS/RANDOM HOUSE. 448 PP. \$25.

That week [in March 1998, when Bill Gates traveled to Washington to testify in the Senate Judiciary Committee's anti-trust hearings] any number of media outlets were phoning Microsoft headquarters for any spare tidbit about the World's Richest Man. A reporter from *USA Today* asked what brand of sunglasses Gates wears. A business weekly called to ask if Gates had done any sight-seeing while in D.C.

No detail is too minute if it is about Gates. *Fortune* covers him like a fanzine. In one issue, there's a cover story about "America's Billionaire Buddies" Gates and Buffett, in another story about billionaires Gates and Allen, "the ultimate buddy act in business history."



In that piece, the writer (who described Gates as "the skinny one") can't help but pinch himself through the first two paragraphs because he's actually sitting on a deck overlooking Lake Washington, sipping Cokes with two people so wealthy: "Hard to believe," Brent Schlender wrote, "they're so nonchalant . . . [these] undisputed masters of the digital universe." On April 19, 1998, one share of Microsoft stock hit \$93.32. A front-page headline above the fold in *The Seattle Times* blared GATES WORTH \$50 BILLION. That headline would appear in newspapers around the country as Gates, at forty-two years old, became

the world's first fifty-billionaire. Shortly into the new year, Gates crossed the \$70 billion mark, generating yet more news articles.

But, in the end, we study the bug from so many different angles that it's we who become the interesting specimen. Gates's father travels to Taiwan, and his picture lands in a Taiwanese business paper. Why? "People want to know what Bill Gates will look like when he gets old," You Mei-yueh, director of Taiwan's *Economic Daily News*, told *The Wall Street Journal* (portly and bald).

Rivlin's previous nonfiction books include *Drive-By* and *Fire on the Prairie*.

OPENING ARGUMENT

FROM **SECRECY: THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE**, BY DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN. YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS. 262 PP. \$22.50.

We are not going to put an end to secrecy, nor should we. It is at times legitimate and necessary. But a culture of secrecy need not remain in the norm in American government as regards national security. It is possible to conceive that a competing culture of openness might develop, and that it could assert and demonstrate greater efficiency. The central fact is that we live today in an Information Age. Open sources give us the vast majority of what we need to know in order to make intelligent decisions. Decisions made by people at ease with disagreement and ambiguity and tentativeness. Decisions made by those who understand how to exploit the wealth and diversity of publicly available information,

who no longer simply assume that clandestine collection — that is, "stealing secrets" — equals greater intelligence. Analysis, far more than secrecy, is the key to security.

A case can be made that secrecy is for losers. For people who don't know how important information really is. The Soviet Union realized this too late. Openness is now a singular, and singularly American, advantage. We put it in peril by poking along in the mode of an age now past. It is time to dismantle government secrecy, this most pervasive of cold war-era regulations. It is time to begin building the supports for the era of openness that is already upon us.

Moynihan is the senior U.S. Senator from New York.



NOTHING BUT

FROM **TRUTH TO TELL: TELL IT EARLY, TELL IT ALL, TELL IT YOURSELF**, BY LANNY J. DAVIS. THE FREE PRESS. 288 PP. \$25.



In certain instances, when we were trying to kill the impact of a [damaging] story, we used certain news organizations for this purpose. And we chose certain time periods or days of the week to place these stories with the same purpose in mind. Usually our first choice was The Associated Press. Not only was the AP's team of investigative reporters first-rate and notoriously fact-oriented and fair, but we found that when an AP story went out on the overnight wires the major daily national newspapers, such as *The Washington Post* or *The New York Times*, would not be inclined to give it front-page play. If they printed it at all, it was often buried on an inside page. More importantly, if an AP story was comprehensive and accurate . . . it was less likely that the major dailies would have much left to report in the next day's papers.

Two other news organizations of choice for placement of our deep-background stories were *The Wall Street Journal* and the *Los Angeles Times*. It might seem odd that the *WSJ* was one of our favorites, given the ideological hostility towards Clinton and his administration regularly reflected on its editorial page. But the *WSJ* had some of the best reporters in the city — led by Glenn Simpson and Phil Kuntz — covering these scandal stories. And the *WSJ* almost never put current political news on the front page; it usually got placed on the back page of the front section, which often diminished the impact of the story. We liked the *Los Angeles Times* for similar reasons. The *L.A. Times* also had three reporters who were very highly regarded for their fairness and balanced reporting: Alan Miller, Glenn Bunting, and David Willman. And for reasons that again seemed to us based more on institutional pride than anything else, the major national daily newspapers resisted repeating stories broken by an "out of town" newspaper such as the *Los Angeles Times*.

Davis was special counsel to President Clinton from December 1996 through January 1998.

www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org

CJR on the Web

Columbia Journalism Review is the best source of journalism information on the Web. The CJR site is updated regularly, and features:

- A searchable database of information on more than 12,000 newspapers and magazines.
- The full text of every CJR article written since 1992 . . . more than 1,000 stories.

excerpts

BORN-AGAIN JOURNALISM

FROM **NOT BY POLITICS ALONE: THE ENDURING INFLUENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT**, BY SARA DIAMOND. THE GUILFORD PRESS. 280 PP. \$23.95.

In February 1995, the Evangelical Press News Services [EPNS] reported an incident in which a dozen members of an activist group called Lesbian Avengers entered the Bay Area office of Exodus International. Exodus is the leading antigay counseling ministry. It is well known to evangelical readers as an effort to turn homosexuals away from their "sinful life-style." Inside the Exodus office, the Avengers — accompanied by a reporter from a San Francisco gay newspaper — released hundreds of live crickets and waved signs urging God to send a plague on the organization. The incident got little coverage in the local mainstream media. But thanks to EPNS's short dispatch, the story was picked up by many of the regional evangelical newspapers.

The story gave legitimacy to the anti-gay cause precisely at a time when the Christian Right sought support for its

www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org
www.cjr.org

- Resource guides on covering mental health issues, crime, tobacco, and other topics.
- A message board where you can post classified advertising, engage in debates and discuss journalism issues in the news.
- "Who Owns What," a road map to which corporations are financially connected with which products and media outlets.
- Links to journalism-related material on the Web.

Visit CJR online today at
<http://www.cjr.org>

gay cause precisely at a time when the Christian Right sought support for its antigay rights ballot initiatives. In EPNS's version of events, Exodus was just minding its own business when it was attacked by aggressive lesbians. The story mined the twin themes of "religious persecution" and "gay excess."

The Avenger story typifies the circulation of informational tidbits through the evangelical media. Much of what is published and broadcast is more subtle than the Avenger story, and involves the creation of a general view in which born-again believers can see themselves both as special and protected from secular influences. The sheer volume of Christian media enables evangelicals to live culturally in a parallel universe alongside secular society. Believers may partake of the secular society. Believers may partake of the secular entertainment and news media to their hearts' content. They can talk sports scores and Hollywood gossip with non-Christian coworkers and still rely on a safety net of information and inspiration coming from their own media institutions.

Diamond is the author of, among other books, Roads to Dominion: Right-Wing Movements and Political Power in the United States.

The Virtual Reporter

by Mike Hoyt

The estimable R. W. Apple Jr., veteran political reporter for *The New York Times*, has a minor confession to make about his January series on the impeachment trial of the president. Though the stories were prominently labeled with the running logo IN THE CHAMBER, Apple did not set foot inside the Senate. He covered the trial off TV. "That's correct," Apple says. "After a few days somebody said to me, 'doesn't that imply that you were in the chamber'? It did seem to me afterwards that it was somewhat two-faced. By that time it was a little late."

Truth in labeling aside, why cover the historic doings from the small screen when an excellent seat in the Senate press gallery is available? Apple reasoned that since his assignment was a just-the-facts kind of piece, color and analysis left to others, "I thought that, if I got in the midst of it, the temptation to have my story affected by the spinmeisters there would be very great." He wanted, he says, "to be as pure as I could."

Well, maybe. But for a reporter to distance himself from the event he is covering is to filter out large swaths of reality. "I'm sure I lost something," Apple concedes. The dynamics? A sense of the room? The little scenes outside the frame of the camera? Something. Yet in government and politics, in sports, and in courthouses all over the land, more reporters are choosing to distance themselves from what they are covering, and there's a price to pay.

Part of the reason for the increase in this phenomenon is that there are so many of us swarming all over big stories now. For a monster news event like the O.J. Simpson trial, of course, many reporters have no choice but to cover it off the screen. In Brooklyn this spring, at the trial of the cops accused of savaging Abner Louima, a "second site" was set up, a room with a large-screen TV and a live video feed. "A great many of the reporters actually preferred the second site," says Shirley Wilson, case manager for federal Judge Eugene Nickerson. "They could drink their coffee and talk to each other." By order of the judge, the camera focused only on the witnesses and the attorneys, and on sidebar conferences with the audio turned off.

The situation was similar at the "Nanny Trial" in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1997, where more than 600 reporters came to watch Louise Woodward face a charge of infanticide. "Everybody who really wanted to get in and showed up at 9 A.M. got in," says the clerk for Superior Judge Hiller Zobel. "We had room for about forty. Most of them didn't want to get in. They wanted to watch it on TV upstairs and chew gum and stuff."

Mike Hoyt (mh151@columbia.edu) is CJR's senior editor.



Covering a trial via the tube

Henry Goldman, a writer for Bloomberg News who is a lawyer and has covered many trials, is one who made sure he got in. As the camera focused on Woodward, "I saw how the jury was taking her testimony. There was no question in my mind that they weren't buying it. I didn't get any sense of empathy. She seemed too prepared. I'm not commenting on whether she was telling the truth, but to my mind it made her less credible as a witness." Later, covering another story in another city, Goldman watched the trial on television. "I was shocked at how much better she seemed to come across," he says. "She looked marvelous. On TV if you don't hesitate, if you are well prepared, you come off well."

Aside from distortion, the video version offers tunnel vision. "If you are not in the courtroom you are missing things," Goldman says. "The arched eyebrow of the judge, the shrug of the opposing attorney, whatever." There are disadvantages of being there too, of course. "You can't get up and leave freely, or read, or be on the Internet, or use the phone," notes Bill Dedman, who teaches computer-assisted reporting and writes on a part-time basis for *The New York Times*. "So we sit in the press room, where we watch the trial/show on closed-circuit TV, talk with our editors, get spun by advocates who wander in, stay online to read e-mail or check clips."

"It really is better," he says. "Except it's worse."

Dedman got to cover a piece of last year's home run derby between Sammy Sosa and Mark McGwire, and he was struck by "how much information is available in the press box, and how little relevance it has to the event, how distancing it is." How you are drowned in statistics. He noticed how some sports reporters go "from car to elevator to press box to clubhouse to press box to elevator to car," never getting near the fans or the field of play.

It is the fans who most matter, in the mind of Robert Lipsyte, the sports and city columnist for the *Times*. "The sports-writer's worst isolation is from his or her own audience," he says. "It's important to sit with the fans. You get an idea of what they're thinking, what their images of the players are. The reporter who goes from car to pressbox and back down to car ends up writing for the other guys, the sportswriters who are doing the same thing."

Stadium press boxes have TVs, which can be extremely handy, between the instant replays and the sometimes-better view. But, notes Lipsyte, it is a sanitized view. We can be very good writers and producers, but if we sanitize our reporting, our stories fall short of the mark.

HEARST: WHERE JOURNALISM OF DISTINCTION IS AN EVERYDAY STORY



AFTER
COLUMBINE,
A NEWSPAPER
1,000 MILES
AWAY TOOK
THE INITIATIVE
TO PREVENT
VIOLENCE IN
SCHOOLS.



Could something as shocking as high schoolers shooting fellow students happen in San Antonio? That was the question on many citizens' minds after the massacre at a suburban Denver high school. The San Antonio Express-News was sensitive to the concerns of parents, children and teachers and decided to address the key issues.

The result was an unusual 16-page tabloid section distributed to 69 area high schools. More than 92,000 educators and students were given time to read and discuss "Safe in San Antonio Schools." The special section also was read by many more online.

This innovative Newspaper and Education project featured stories on teen privacy and Internet use, conflict resolution, and how teens should deal with peers who exhibit antisocial behavior. The advertising department worked with local corporate sponsors to underwrite the cost and to help companies deliver their own focused message of non-violence.

The entire project was achieved in just over a week after the Columbine High School shootings. This special initiative to help make local schools safer is one more way Hearst Newspapers enrich readers' lives every day.

Read "Safe in San Antonio Schools" online at www.expressnews.com

Brilliance.



ANNOUNCING TIMES MIRROR'S 1999 AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING JOURNALISM, EDITING AND INNOVATION.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

James L. Kopper, *Times Mirror Magazines*

OVERALL PERFORMANCE AWARD

Times Mirror Corporate Staff

JOURNALISTS OF THE YEAR

Linda Matys O'Connell, *The Advocate*; Andre F. Chung, *The Baltimore Sun*; Frederick N. Rasmussen, *The Baltimore Sun*; Tom Keyser, *The Baltimore Sun*; Susan Regan, Jim Wolfe, Bob Pellegrino, *Greenwich Time*; Eric Weiss*, Dave Altimari*, *The Hartford Courant*; Evelyn Iritani, *Los Angeles Times*; Mark R. Arax*, Mark Gladstone*, *Los Angeles Times*; Rosa Salter, *The Morning Call*; Stephanie Saul*, *Newsday*

EDITORS OF THE YEAR

Howard Kamens, *AchieveGlobal*; Brenda Conway, *StayWell*; Duncan Barnes, *Times Mirror Magazines*

INNOVATION PRIZES

The Advocate/Greenwich Time

EMPLOYMENT EXTRA

Dawn Orvis, Eileen Zaccagnino

The Baltimore Sun

SIN SOURCE

Faith Fry, Laura Gamble, Deborah L. Golumbek, Jennifer P. Halbert, Jean C. Halle, Lisa LoVullo, Robin Milligan

VILLAGE VOICE CONTRACT

Bruce Barwick, Diane Bougourd, Daniel Campasino, John C. Christopolus, Jack Conaboy, Robert M. Crocco, Shelley H. Cuffee, Glenn W. Davis, John Dwyer, Edwin M. Foard III, Acklima C. Greer, Celia Kurisch, Katherine B. Lawler, Pat V. Maiola, Bruce McEntee, Tom Moore, Francis X. Przybylek, Edward Roubal, Bob Russ, Stephen G. Seidl, Michael J. Stracke

The Hartford Courant

ONE EDITION, ONE PRESS

Victor N. Champ, Louis Clayton, Joe DeLuca, Robert D. Fedesco, Matt Massagli, Julius Neto, Joe J. Rei, Carlos Santos, Valerie Smith, Paul Spencer, F. Gregory Whalen, Tony Wiggins, Gail Williams

WOMEN'S INITIATIVE*

Lynne DeLucia, Jone Fulkerson, Janice Gucciardi, Naedine Joy Hazell, Stephanie Heisler, Scott Johnson, Mark Lukas, Donna McCain, Jocelyn McClurg, Ejiro Onobrakpeya, Sherry Peters, Barbara Roessner, Melanie Shaffer, Sylvia Chávez Sitters

Jeppesen Sanderson

REAL ESTATE TASK FORCE

Myriam Baumhoefener, Peter Becker, Michael Bergmann, Michael Bill, Hermann Dudda, Thomas Holtbruegge, Robert Krause, Grant Lomas

Los Angeles Times

PRINTING PRESS PLATE LOCK-UPS

William Nickerson

OUR TIMES*

Mary Beth Adomaitis, Deborah Albright, Steve Anderson, John Arthur, Edward J. Boyer, Ray Chavez, Frank del Olmo, Tony Dodero, Tom Elsesser, Cynthia Freedland, Kim Gomi, Tom Gorman, Tim Haworth, Tim Hughes, Gail Hyland-Savage, Thomas H. Johnson, Bob Karcher, Judee B. Kendall, Hank Knight, William Lobdell, Orli Low, Bob Magnuson, Steve Marble, Marc Martin, Kathy Michalak, Kim McCleary La France, William Nottingham, William Overend, Ronald Roberts, Pramod Shah, David Skilliter, Scott Steepleton, Julia C. Wilson, Maureen C. White

Newsday

HOME DELIVERY DEPOT

Jayne Boden, Irene Knipper, Dot McKillop, Glenn Stidham, Joe Sturm, John Tedesco

NIGHTBEAT EXTRA

Carole Fleming, Marc Horowitz, Joseph Pellegrino, Keith Potthoff, Gerry Schultz, Phyllis Singer

1999 BRIDAL MEDIA PACKAGE

Maxine Atkins, Carole Fleming, Patrice Golde

Times Mirror Corporate

TEAMS PROJECT

Leon Pilosof

Times Mirror Magazines

FIELD & STREAM CLUB

Robert M. Cohn, William McCaffrey

CELEBRATING 70*

David F. Brickey, Albert Dickson, Kathy Kipkeade, Steve Meyerhof, Ron Smith, Bill Wilson

* Designates Chairman's Award, which recognizes exceptional merit in each category.



Times Mirror

The Lower case

Things get ugly for Arab beauty queen after contest



AP/WIDEWORLD (ALISHA JARROLD)

The Washington Times 4/6/99

Man's Body Found In Car Trunk

Foul Play Is Suspected

Albuquerque Journal 4/15/99

Suicide: Bill discourages committing suicide alone

The (Portland) Oregonian 5/25/99

Report Says Women in Prison Systems Often Abuse Victims

Los Angeles Times 4/12/99

This year, more than 98 percent of American females will die of something besides breast cancer.

Chicago Tribune 2/2/99

Slaying victim's car is spotted

The (Santa Fe) New Mexican 12/5/98

Nine arrested for beating wrong man

Iowa City Press-Citizen 8/12/98

Ashley Weaver was chosen Ms. Congenital, Lacy C. Minor, Syretta L. White and Alisha Hopwood were the other contestants.

Waco Tribune-Herald 5/8/99

Police patrol vandalized site nearly 40 times

The Orlando Sentinel 4/17/99

Dog rules on agenda in Old Orchard

Portland (Maine) Press Herald 5/18/99

Adherents of Falun Gong demonstrate their exercises, a mix of movement and medication, Sunday at Buckingham Fountain in Grant Park.

Chicago Sun-Times 5/3/99



NEW JERSEY NEWSPHOTOS

PHOTO BY JOHN O'BOYLE

Since he knows he has a job next season, it was easy for Jim Fassel to keep his chin up yesterday.

The (Newark) Star Ledger 12/29/98

Looking for answers about tobacco? You're in the right neighborhood.

Welcome to Main Street, the Brown & Williamson web site, your comprehensive resource for tobacco information.



Click on **THE COURTHOUSE**
for information about:

- Trials in Progress
- Recent Developments
- Attorneys General Resolution
- And much more...

Click on **HOT TOPICS** for news about:

- Ways to Prevent Underage Smoking
- Tips on Quitting Smoking
- Cigarette Tobacco Ingredients
- Positions on Smoking and Health
- And more...

Click on **THE LIBRARY** for
information about:

- Current Economic Impact of Tobacco
- Social History of Tobacco
- News Release Archives
- And more... we invite you to
drop by the neighborhood anytime!

www.brownandwilliamson.com

BROWN & WILLIAMSON
TOBACCO

A Responsible Company In A Controversial Industry

